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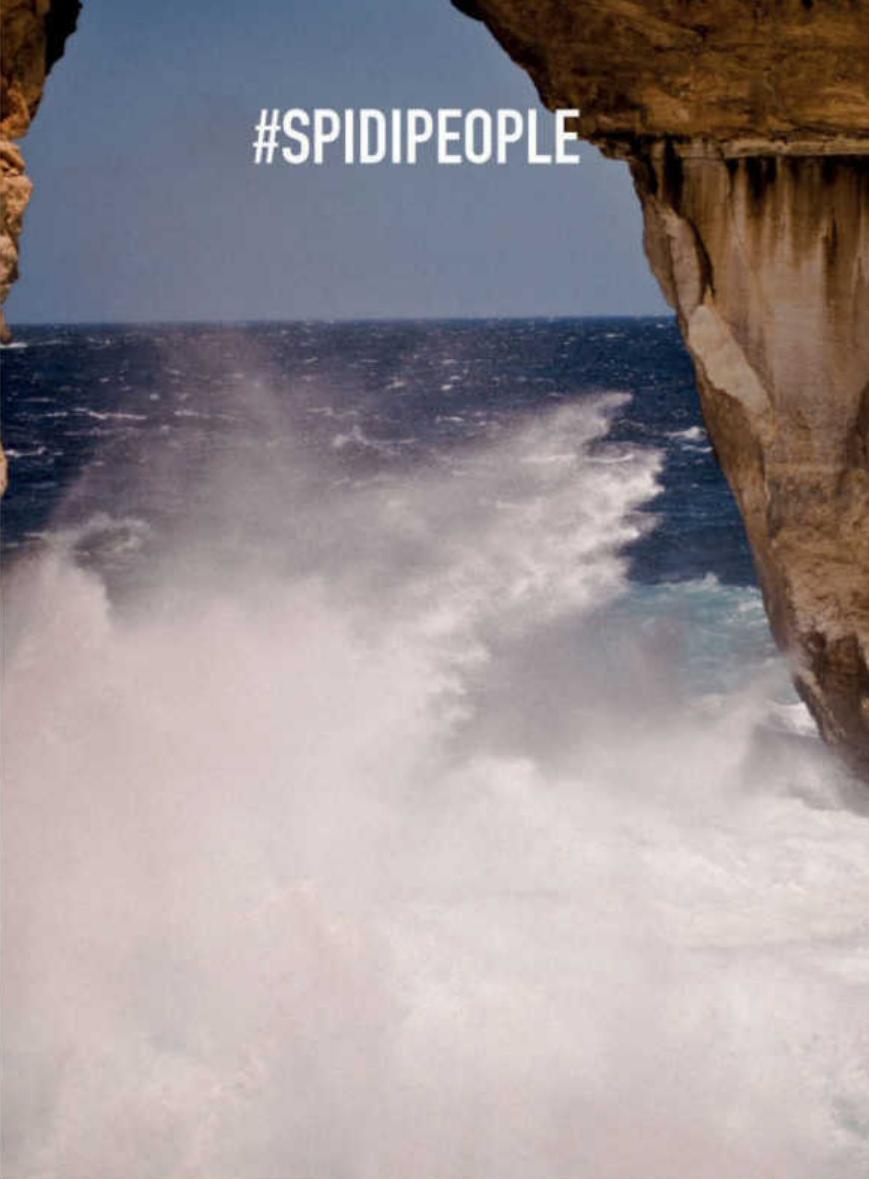


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"Needless to say, the mountain scenery was truly spectacular. At the same time, the desolation and isolation gave us a healthy respect for those who struggle to live here." UK to Mongolia might seem impossible for some, but for Malcolm and Sara it was simply done. See how on page 72.

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MICK MATHESON

# THE ROAD AHEAD

**Inspiration comes from the experiences of others and the rides you haven't yet completed**

**T**he people who write the stories you read in ARR inspire me a lot. Take Malcolm Glover and Sara Eldib, who feature in the London-Mongolia article in this issue. I mean, wow! What a journey, what a life-affirming experience. I admire not just the fact that they did such a challenging overlander, but that they have showed us that it's eminently doable, as long as you have the will to make it happen.

That same kind of determination comes through in Bennett Ring's story about his first big ride. It was a weekend away — not quite an overlander on the scale that Malcolm and Sara did, but a significant undertaking nonetheless. How many of us remember swallowing nervously before setting off for the first time? I love that kind of thing, and I suspect I've lost something along the way because it takes so much more to make me excited these days.

Mark Hinchliffe is always heading off on local rides from his base in Brisbane. His stories have led me to a few places I hadn't been before. If I'd had his story before the last time I was in Maryborough, I might have had even more fun up there. Then again, last time was when the Ulysses Club had its AGM there so I was rather too busy to go exploring.

However, I did make time to explore when I last rode down the Olympic Highway, which I've covered in my story on the alternatives to it in this issue. I had such a good time on that ride that it keeps popping up in my memory. Drop me a note if you take any of the detours I've described; it'll be good know what you reckon of them.

I'm feeling a bit more inspired right now. In a couple of weeks Anne and I will take our first long ride together in years. We're planning a week away on the bike on the eve of the time when we can, in theory, go away any time we want without worrying about the kids. The youngest is 18, so we've leapt that hurdle, and now she's only got a few weeks left of school before we can leave her with adult responsibilities while we revert to being young and free. Well, that's the plan, anyway ...

In these next school holidays we're leaving her to look after the house, on the condition that there will be no parties and no boys

and no anything-else-we-may-disapprove-of (yeah, right!). We will load up the BMW and do a leisurely loop over the ranges and back, taking in some very familiar territory that we'll get to see in a different light.

The ride will be a taste of what's to come from next year, when we aim to escape as often as work allows. Bloody work.

It feels almost as if my motorcycling life has come full circle, and I can see clearly the various stages of it over the years. There was the adolescent dream of one day hitting the road on two wheels, followed by the wild years when I'd ride anywhere and

everywhere until there was no more money to convert to fuel. No matter how much I rode, I'd still dream of the rides I wasn't doing.

Eventually it was impossible to justify spending all my money on motorcycling. Kids reinforced that point. Life got serious and sometimes riding took a back seat. But over the past few years motorcycling has come on strongly again.

So today I'm plotting the week's route into the TomTom, daydreaming about the day we'll be out on the road on the bike. Even when we're out there, I'll be dreaming of rides we're not yet doing. ARR

**"The ride will be a taste of what's to come from next year, when we aim to escape as often as work allows. Bloody work"**



■ For Matho, it's time to get two-up and start exploring the wonders of the world ... or the weirdness of Victoria

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# NEWS FOR ROADRIDERS

## RIDE TO SELL

### Demo rides improve motorcycle sales

The availability of demo rides not only improves customer satisfaction of dealerships, but also increases motorcycle sales, according to a US motorcycle industry study.

The ninth annual Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index (PSI) US Motorcycle Industry Benchmarking Study found that good dealer experience translates to improved sales. The study measures dealership treatment of 1779 mystery shoppers who visited US dealerships between July 2014 and April 2015. The study marked the ninth consecutive year that Ducati and Harley-Davidson dealerships were on the podium, with Ducati backing up for its second win in a row.

While there is no equal study in Australia, the results are indicative of strict global training standards of dealer staff and attitudes to offering demo rides. All of the five top-ranked brands in the US Pied Piper study — Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Victory, Triumph and BMW — improved their performances over 2014. In total, 13 of the 17 brands improved their performance, with declining scores for Can-Am, Indian and Star, the Yamaha cruiser brand.

Pied Piper president Fran O'Hagan says there is much about the motorcycle business that dealers can't control. "In contrast, dealerships can control the sales process used by their sales team, and the results are clearly worth the effort."

#### US dealer satisfaction index:

(2015 Pied Piper Prospect Satisfaction Index  
US Motorcycle Industry Benchmarking Study)

	Change from 2014	PSI score
Ducati	(+2)	116
Harley-Davidson	(+1)	112
Victory	(+4)	110
Triumph	(+4)	109
BMW	(+8)	108
INDUSTRY AV	(+3)	107
Can-Am	(-1)	106
Suzuki	(+2)	103
MV Agusta	(+5)	103
Kawasaki	(+4)	102
Moto Guzzi	(+7)	102
Star*	(-1)	101
Indian	(-1)	101
Aprilia	(+10)	101
Honda	(+4)	97
Yamaha	(+4)	96
Husqvarna	(-1)	95
KTM	(+8)	95

\* Star is the name for the Yamaha cruiser range in the US



▲ Programs like the popular BMW Motorrad GS Experience test ride make riders happy and sell bikes!

# INSTANT DARKER

## AGV visor tints at touch of button

**A**GV's new motorcycle visor darkens or lightens almost instantly at the hit of a switch! There are already visors on the market that are photochromatic, changing with the light, but the Italian helmet maker says its new AGVisor changes tint in less than a second.

AGVisor uses a thin liquid crystal (LCD) layer powered by a small rechargeable battery and operated by a glove-friendly button at the bottom left side of the visor. It's not cheap, though. The AGVisor will be available in Europe for around €200 (\$276), which is about three times the cost of most tinted visors. There is no word on when it will be available in Australia or other markets.

The visor may be the answer to the legal issue in Australia of having tinted visors.

However, under current laws, it will first have to be approved by Australian Standards for impact resistance.

AGV says the 3mm-thick visor is anti-fog and can hold a dark tint for 12 consecutive hours, which is more than enough for all

but Iron Butt riders. The battery is under the switch in a box and it takes two hours to recharge. When the power runs out, it reverts to a clear visor for safety.

AGVisor also has a patented visor lock to prevent it from opening at high speed.



If Valentino says it is good, it is good

# WOMEN ON WHEELS

**T**he 2014 Babe Raid motorcycle rally in Ballina, NSW, has set a world record for the most women on motorcycles in one place. Babe Raid organiser Debb Dagger says the annual Ballina Raid is now the biggest all-women's motorcycle weekend event in the world.

In 2014, 284 women rode to the coastal town

to set the record of 221 women on 190 bikes as the largest number of women on motorcycles at the same time at a women's-only motorcycle rally. Guinness World Records deemed the event "not unique enough".

"There is no other weekend like the Babe Raid that does what the Babe Raid does in the

## Record set for women motorcyclists

world that I can find," says Debb.

The sixth annual Ballina Raid is on again on September 11–14, 2015, but Debb says they won't be trying to break the record unless another group breaks it in the meantime.

The Ballina Raid will be followed by the Echuca Raid in Victoria on November 13–16, 2015.

The 38-year-old mother of two and senior property manager who has been riding since 2007 thought up the idea of the Babe Raid with two friends after attending many motorcycle rallies that were "really male-based".

The first Babe Raid was held in September 2010, when they expected 60 and attracted more than double. Debb says Babe Raid has reduced the segregation that existed among women between various clubs and groups, and allowed women to express themselves in what is a "very male-dominated area".

Men only play supporting roles in the annual Babe Raids, including a mechanic who gives free tech talks and advice. Debb says the information empowers women to look after their own bikes.

Babe Raids include gymkhana events, show and shine, themed dinner nights, rider training, tech talks, community market stalls, breakfasts, yoga, rides and more.

Registrations for both events are open. Visit [zwheelbabes.com](http://zwheelbabes.com) for more information.

■ No boys allowed. Babe Raid is a great girls only weekend



# NEXT IN LINE

**Naked BMW K 1600 coming?**



**B**MW is set to follow Honda with a naked version of its flagship K 1600 tourer. Just like Honda did with the Gold Wing F6B and F6C, BMW's unveiling on the shores of Lake Como in Italy is what BMW calls a new chapter in the brand's history of concept bikes.

The last time the Bavarian manufacturer and LA custom builder got together they produced the Concept Ninety which became the very popular R nineT, so there seems every likelihood this will also go into production in a modified form.

BMW had long said it would not return to cruisers after the innovative R 1200 C failed to inspire critical acclaim or customer loyalty. But now it appears they are jumping on the current bagger trend with this bike that seems to be inspired more by the Honda Gold Wing F6B and F6C than any Harley-Davidson or traditional bagger.

Recent concept BMWs from Japanese custom houses in conjunction with BMW Motorrad featured the 1600cc transverse offset slant six-cylinder engine from the K 1600 range. The Concept 101 is also powered by that engine, not the W-3 engine that recently surfaced in the international patent office.

The W-3 may have been unconventional but it looked more like a traditional V-twin cruiser except for the extra cylinder. The name Concept 101 comes from the displacement in cubic inches, which is a nod to American baggers with imperial engine capacity measures. Following on the recent US trend toward custom baggers, it features a big front wheel, slammed rear end and low-slung saddlebags.

While many American customisers have

been turning Harley Touring models into custom baggers, the only production bagger on the market is the new Victory Magnum. The number 101 also refers to Highway 101 near the design studios of BMW Group subsidiary Designworks in Newbury Park, on the other side of LA from Roland Sands Designs.

The designers used the motto "The Spirit of the Open Road" to design the bike, then handed over the final execution to the RSD crew who made many individual elements by hand.

As a result, signature machine parts such as the clutch cover, timing chain cover and wheels all bear his logo.

There is no word on when it will go into production, but it is likely to be within the next model year which was the timeline from Concept Ninety to R nineT production.

## EAST BEATS WEST

Before the American-designed Concept 101, these radical customs signalled what could have been the next variant in the BMW K 1600 range.

They were produced by BMW Motorrad Japan as part of their Ignite Straight Six project, so it's not a totally unrelated independent venture by a custom house.

So don't treat these Japanese concepts lightly. They could eventually make it to the drawing board, even if they are substantially modified for production.

They are made with the K 1600 GTL engine and frame by Kenji Nagai of Ken's Factory and Keiji Kawakita of Hot-Dock Custom-Cycles.

The Ken's Factory Special is a minimalist aluminium machine with a solo seat, massive 23-inch front tyre and 20-inch solid-hub rear wheel.

But our favourite is the Steampunk Juggernaut by Kawakita. They describe it as a "synthesis of Mad Max metal and Jules Verne's imagination".

In these days of hiding the plumbing as much as possible, it's a welcome relief to see it exposed and even highlighted. We especially love the gauges down the side of the beast.



▲ The Ken's Factory Special (left) and Steampunk Juggernaut (right)



■ RSD influence on the Concept 101 is clear!

# PURE ADRENALIN

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# BLING KING

## Indian Chief Swarovski-crystallised

**J**ust as Indian Motorcycle has introduced the matt-black minimalist Indian Chief Dark Horse, Romanian singer Angelica Ganea has unveiled her Indian Chief covered in Swarovski crystals.

She has teamed up with Austrian company Swarovski to entirely coat her Chief with their crystals. The result might not suit everyone's tastes and we wonder how difficult it would be to clean!

Angelica says she has been working with crystals most of her life and using them on her stage costumes, shoes, microphones and musical instruments. She is now a Swarovski branding partner and wanted to tackle something larger to bejewel.

It took more than 1500 hours of intense work to form the intricate patterns. Angelica claims it's a world first, although we have heard of people bejewelling their cars before.



■ That's a little bit more than crushed beer bottles!

# MOTORCYCLES FIRST

## Progressive Melbourne

**M**elbourne has become the most progressive city in Australia and one of the most progressive in the world for promoting motorcycle parking on footpaths and actively encouraging riders into the inner city.

The Melbourne City Council 2015–2018 Motorcycle Plan passed unanimously with three last-minute amendments. One advocates converting 20 car spaces into free bike parking by forgoing revenue estimated to be about \$250,000 in the coming year. The other two relate to a survey of the suitability of allowing motorcycle parking on footpaths less than two

metres wide where bikes could be obstacles for pedestrians with disabilities.

The plan was developed in consultation with several motorcycle rider groups and individual riders, including the Victorian Motorcycle Council and Independent Riders Group. The progressive plan also advocates the following:

- Plastic barriers around dangerous construction sites and protection around median strip trees;
- Replace steel and concrete bollards with plastic flexible ones;
- Investigate solutions for slippery road paint, tram lines and metal plates;
- Encourage the state government to accept lane

filtering (this is being introduced in September, but the specific rules have not yet been released) and allow riders to use bus lanes;

- Identify more places for free footpath parking and make it easier to find with appropriate signs;
- Investigate early start-up for riders at traffic lights; and
- Consider allowing riders access to closed roads and entry/turn bans.

Melbourne has long been a conducive environment for riding motorcycles with free footpath parking and, until last year, no tolls. Consequently, the city has witnessed a steady growth in motorcycles from 1.5 per cent of traffic in 2006 to 2.6 per cent in 2014. That's 73 per cent in eight years, despite the fact that the changeable weather can often work against the rider!



■ Not as progressive as The Moody Blues and Pink Floyd, but it'll do ...

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# PAYING FOR THE FUTURE

## Subsidy for electric bikes

**O**ne of the biggest hurdles to the introduction of electric motorcycles and scooters is the high initial cost, so the UK government is considering offering a subsidy on the price of electric two-wheelers.

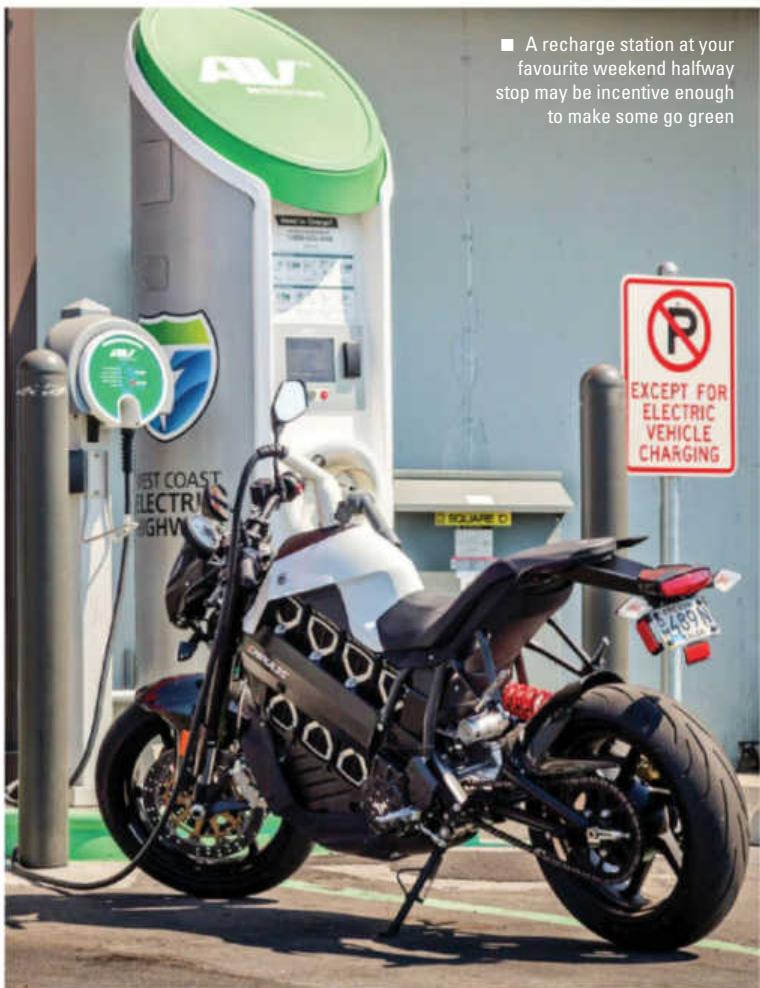
The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) has allocated about \$14 million to the program, which will extend to 2020. Riders will get a maximum subsidy of \$2800 per vehicle, reducing purchase price by up to an estimated 20 per cent. They will also escape the Congestion Charge and Work Place Parking Levy.

There is no such plan in place in Australia for any electric or hybrid vehicles.

Motorcycle Industry Association CEO Steve Kenward says the subsidy recognises the part motorcycles and scooters can play in a low-carbon future.

"The subsidy will encourage more people to opt for electric motorcycles and scooters, which will help solve the UK's appalling congestion problem. Economically, it will provide a much-needed boost to this sector of the automotive industry. We hope this will result in increased investment in UK research and development for electric-powered two-wheel vehicles. We also hope it will give manufacturers who already have electric models for sale in mainland Europe the confidence to launch in the UK."

While there are only a few small electric bikes in Australia, there soon will be electric motorcycles and scooters available from major manufacturers such as BMW, Yamaha, Harley-Davidson and Victory. A subsidy like the UK plan may encourage these companies to launch those products here.



■ A recharge station at your favourite weekend halfway stop may be incentive enough to make some go green

# WATERSHED AT THE WOOLSHED



## Potential realised for Woolshed Classic Rally

**D**espite the inaugural Woolshed Classic Motorcycle Rally on the Darling Downs being washed out by freak storms, the event will go ahead in 2016.

Organiser Mark Morrissey says the storm and subsequent flooding prevented more than 400 historic bikes from being displayed and the demonstration flat track and trials displays were cancelled. He said it was a shame as the rally has the potential to become a major attraction on the rally calendar with its blend of displays, attractions, magnificent venue, central location and scenic riding routes.

Mark is convinced he will run the rally again next year with even more attractions promised, including a street sprint event in nearby Oakey. He's hoping it will become the Aussie version of the Goodwood Revival.

The event is staged in the historic Jondaryan Woolshed with plenty of indoor areas for displays, a food hall, movie "theatre" and bands. It's the biggest surviving historic woolshed in Australia.

The historic complex stands on 64 hectares (160 acres) and can cater for enormous numbers of day visitors and thousands of campers.



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# CHARGING FORWARD

**Electric bikes to recharge in seconds**

**W**ould you buy an electric motorcycle if it could be recharged in seconds rather than hours? Many electric cars and motorcycles now have an acceptable range from their batteries and motors, but there are still long charging times.

Researchers at the LA-based California NanoSystems Institute at the University of California (UCLA) believe they have developed a hybrid battery that could lead to electric vehicles being charged in a matter of seconds. The new device combines the high-energy storage of batteries with the quick charge and discharge rates of supercapacitors.

While the current hybrid is only small, the UCLA researchers believe they can build hybrid supercapacitors on a large scale to power motorcycles, cars and even your house.

Professor Richard Kaner and Dr Maher El-Kady have built a high-performance hybrid supercapacitor that lasts more than 10,000

recharge cycles, stores six times more energy than a conventional super capacitor and holds more than twice as much charge as a typical thin-film lithium battery in one fifth the thickness of a sheet of paper.

A hybrid supercapacitor like this in a motorcycle would also have the advantage of being much lighter and smaller than the massive batteries being used in electric motorcycles on the market. That would improve handling and allow designers more scope so bikes didn't look awkward and odd.

The researchers also say their thin hybrid supercapacitors can be integrated inside a solar cell, where they can be charged by solar power. These solar panels, containing the hybrid supercapacitors, could be integrated in the panelling of a vehicle, as suggested by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) nanotechnology scientists.

QUT research leader Professor Munzio Motta says supercapacitors are a thin, light and strong film made of two all-carbon electrodes sandwiched around an electrolyte that could easily be placed within the bodywork of a sportsbike.



■ The future is bright under the sun

# BACK ON TRACK

## Zero back in Oz

**T**he full range of 2015 Zero Motorcycles electric bikes is returning to Australia with four dealers in three states.

American electric motorcycle company Zero had been without a dealer for a few months, but has sealed a deal with Jeff

Gleeson, the Brisbane importer of Gas Gas, Christini and AJP motorcycles.

Zero Motorcycles Asia Pacific sales director Phillip Wilkinson says the new distributor will provide customer and dealer support for future and previous Zero models. The dealers are Moto Arena, Gold Coast; Central Coast Motorcycles, NSW; Moto Technic, Victoria; and Euro Bike, Noosa.

More dealers are expected to be appointed in coming months.

Rideaway prices for the Zero range are \$20,490 for the Zero S naked road bike and DS dual sport, \$26,490 for the Zero S street fighter with more power and \$16,990 for the Zero FX "stealthfighter".

All electric motorcycles in Australia are learner-approved.

■ Zero are back in Oz



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# BAD TO THE BONE

## Motorcycle “terror” is nothing new

If you think motorcycles and riders are vilified now, take a look back at the turn of the previous century when motorcycles “threatened” society.

“A new terror is to be added to our thoroughfares. This is to take the shape of a motorcycle, to be worked by oil and to be capable of a record pace,” says an article in the Melbourne Gossip column of the *Bendigo Advertiser* on 21 November, 1896.

Australian Motorcycle Council secretary

Tony Ellis stumbled across the item while researching in the National Library’s archives. The item shows the level of concern by the community about motorcycles, something that has not abated much in the following century.

Unfortunately, motorcycles and riders represent either a “terror” to the community, or other motorists are just plain jealous of our lifestyle, freedom and the ability to conveniently slip between the lanes of traffic.

The 1896 article explains the technology of the coming motorbike revolution and ends with this caution: “The thoroughfares are dangerous enough as it is, with trams and

other conveyances and with bicycles shooting sharply round corners without even that premonitory tinkle of the bell that is popularly supposed to be one of the regulations for cycle traffic. But what will they be with the motorcycles.”

The article also scaremongers about the “horrors” of the electric motor “which is gaining so much popularity in the old country”. The writer says motorcycles would not be allowed on public roads without an Act of Parliament. “Parliament is not likely to enter on the consideration of any fresh legislation for a long time to come. For which relief much thanks,” it says.



## STICK SHIFT

### Joysticks to replace handlebars?

A Swiss inventor has produced the world's first electric bicycle with a joystick replacing the handlebars. He believes it could be used on motorcycles and scooters.

Yvan Forclaz built the Joystick Bike to create a more fun and engaging form of cycling. We're not so sure motorcycle riders would find it much fun replacing riding skills with something more like a computer game console or aircraft controls.

The Joystick Bike uses a joystick on the right to steer the front wheels via a hard mechanical connection. The bar on the left is for shifting gears and controlling the electric motor. Yvan says these functions could be added to the joystick, eliminating the left handle.

The Joystick Bike debuted at the 2015 International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva in April. Yvan is marketing the patent next year, but there is no word yet on whether it will go into production or how much it would cost.

The prototype has a rear-mounted 400W electric drive and 72V battery pack with a top speed of 60km/h and 40km of range. You can check it out at [www.joystickbike.ch](http://www.joystickbike.ch).



▲ Some motorcycle handlebars already look like joysticks!

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# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

## Toy Run goes for record numbers



The 38th annual Melbourne Toy Run has a new home which organisers hope will help achieve record numbers this year and become a state event.

The Victorian Motorcycle Council has announced the new state-of-the-art venue as Tabcorp Park in Melton, which is expected to attract more than 8000 riders. The Toy Run will be held on Sunday 20 December and should break the Guinness World Record for the world's largest motorcycle toy run, currently held by a toy run in Reading, UK, with just 2000 riders.

Again partnering with classic and hot rod car clubs, the event promises to be a huge family-friendly spectacle for all motoring enthusiasts featuring car and bike displays,

show and shine competitions, a large variety of trade stalls and of course food and entertainment. The event raises money for the charitable contribution to the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal.

According to VMC chair Rob Salvatore, "This welcomed partnership with Tabcorp Park ensures a bright future for the Toy Run and for the all-important charitable tradition at its heart. Riders have a rich history of giving at Christmas time and this partnership only encourages that legacy to grow."

Trade stalls and sponsorship enquiries are welcome. Contact Toy Run Event Coordinator Kerry Walton, 0417 766 555, or via email ([trikenut@bigpond.com](mailto:trikenut@bigpond.com)).

# DUCATI MUSEUM SCORES TRAVEL HONOURS

The Ducati Museum in Bologna has been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for the fourth consecutive year. It's an acknowledgment based on high satisfaction ratings of 4.5 out of 5 posted by more than 40,000 visitors who toured the facility in 2014.

Established in 1998 beside the factory, the

850sq/m museum offers an insight into more than half a century of motorcycle racing. It has seven different theme-based multimedia rooms which include bike displays, vintage video, accessories and curios.

If you can't get to Italy, you can still do a virtual tour on Google Maps by following the famous Cavalieri Ducati Street that takes you to

the company and then exploring right down to the last detail, the rooms and the displayed bikes.

In 2012, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities (regional supervisor of cultural and landscape heritage of Emilia Romagna) registered the Ducati Museum and factory on the official archival heritage listings for historical and cultural importance.



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■ Lane filtering is coming, and the VMC has suggested more speed than other states

# FASTER PLEASE

## Lift lane filter speed

**L**ane filtering speeds should be increased to 40km/h in Victoria, not 30km/h as in NSW, Queensland and the ACT, according to the Victorian Motorcycle Council. That's one of the prime recommendations of the VMC in a submission to the Victorian government, which intends to introduce lane filtering laws from September 1.

"The NSW and Queensland experience suggests that riders expend considerable energy and attention trying to filter safely while maintaining a clear margin to the maximum permissible speed," says the VMC submission, written by chairman Rob Salvatore.

"Maintaining 20–25km/h requires attention on the speedometer and is a speed that can result in reduced motorcycle stability, command, responsiveness and control. These aspects are manageable but take up further attention and concentration. The reduced speed therefore counterintuitively reduces the rider's safety. On this basis, a higher speed is strongly recommended," he says.

Although the Victorian government has already announced its intention to introduce lane-filtering laws, the exact rules have not yet been specified. Already the laws differ in

the three Australian jurisdictions where they have been implemented and there could be a fourth form of the laws when introduced in Victoria, mainly because of the unique existence of tram lines in Melbourne.

"We think it (the submission) represents a practical and achievable filtering framework for Victoria and gives a very strong nod to the work done in NSW and Queensland," Rob told *Australian Road Rider*. "Victoria, especially metropolitan Melbourne, has some unique road characteristics that will require some careful thought — this means Victoria needs its own version of filtering."

"Given this and the relatively smooth implementation of filtering in three other jurisdictions without all the negative predictions coming to light, Victoria is presented with an opportunity to fine-tune motorcycle traffic filtering. The filtering framework represents what the VMC believes is that fine-tuned version."

In another major departure from the rules in other states, the VMC wants the laws applicable to all riders, not just experienced riders. "Gathered input would accept a compromise position of L-plate riders being restricted to safe traffic filtering through stationary traffic at controlled intersections — something that is currently legal under

road rule 141.1.c and already a self-managed and routinely conducted manoeuvre by L-plate riders once sufficiently confident," the submission says. "There is no evidence to suggest that novice riders should be prohibited from filtering in such traffic conditions."

The VMC supports a ban on filtering in school zones as in other states, but adds a ban on filtering at tram stops and safety zones because of the narrower lanes. It also endorses the Queensland rules of edge filtering although on roads marked at 80km/h or higher, not 90km/h.

The VMC submission seeks filtering next to parked cars, in 40km/h zones, between the line of traffic and kerbside and the use of bike lanes for 50m at a time to pass slow or stationary traffic. Their submission also endorses the use of advanced stop lines for cyclists and bicycle boxes at traffic lights and the use of bus lanes not marked "bus use only".

The VMC points out that lane filtering already occurs daily, "primarily by riders managing their safety and progress through heavy and congested traffic".

"The legalisation of motorcycle traffic filtering will therefore formalise the best and safest aspects of current practice to the benefit of all road users and reduced congestion," Rob says in the submission. He adds the VMC will work with VicRoads and the government to implement "as much of our vision as is practical".



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# MOTO MONEY MAKERS

## Motorcycles vital to our economy

**M**otorcycle riders are vital contributors to the economy, according to a new UK report and Australian industry figures.

A UK Motorcycle Industry Association report has revealed some startling statistics to show the economic worth of their industry, an initiative supported by Australian motorcycle industry leaders.

The UK report says motorcycle sales deliver £5.3 billion (A\$10.6 billion) a year to the economy while the industry generates "added value" of more than £2 billion (A\$4 billion), directly employs 58,500 people in 5700 businesses, pays over £1 billion (A\$2 billion) in tax, and exports around £450 million (A\$899 million) a year, up 12 per cent since 2008. (By "added value" they mean things like motorcycle tourism and the hospitality industry — that is,

your weekend ride to the country for a coffee and burger!)

The report says the industry employs more people and is worth more to the UK economy than the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries combined.

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries motorcycle spokesman Rhys Griffiths says that while they don't have a similar report, he believes our motorcycle industry would also be a vital contributor to the national economy, even without a manufacturing component as in the UK.

"When I was at Honda (four years ago), Australia, per capita, was the largest off-road market in the world," he says. "Overall, per capita Australia bats well above the USA, Canada, the UK and Europe. One reason is we can ride all year round."

Rhys says it is important for the industry to collate a similar report as the UK motorcycle

industry "to sell the industry to all and sundry. The figures are quite astounding. It's hard to believe that it is worth more than the agriculture industry," he says.

Here is a brief statistical analysis of the Australian motorcycle industry:

- Contributes \$3.6 billion to the national economy;
- More than one million motorcycles;
- 200,000 new and used sales each year;
- More than 40 brands imported;
- 700 authorised dealers;
- 2000+ related businesses;
- 15,000 people employed;
- 800,000 licence holders;
- 678,000 registered motorcycles;
- 47,500 sport- or single-event licences; and
- 3500 motor sport events each year.

With those figures, it is a wonder we are so often maltreated or overlooked by governments and authorities.



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# **BIG SHOT**

“Detours are always worth it. It’s just a matter of making them happen — choosing to turn off and go the other way instead of plodding along with everyone else.” Get off the beaten track and join us on an exploration of south-west NSW back roads on page 94.

**Photo: Mick Matheson**



# BIG SHOT

"Some days on the road are always going to be better than others.

It's these days we daydream about months later when we're

remembering what it was like to live a life less ordinary."

Malcolm and Sara make a lifetime of memories in their epic adventure from London to Mongolia on page 78.

Photo: Sara Eldib







■ Wallace and Grommet on the road!

# THREE-WHEEL WONDER



**Sidecars and adventure riding aren't always considered compatible, but they are in the case of this engineering marvel**

**A** few years ago I made a TV show called *By Any Means*. I went from my hometown of Wicklow in Ireland to Sydney using all sorts of different forms of transport. From electric bicycles in France to tuk tuks and elephants in India, we tried every crazy transport idea we could get our hands on.

Heading across Eastern Europe I had to ride, or perhaps the correct term is drive, a Ural motorcycle and sidecar. We made our way through Georgia en route to Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. My producer mate, Russ Malkin, played the part of Grommet,



▲ A very comfortable and capable-looking chair!

sitting rather nervously in the sidecar.

It was a gorgeous bit of kit and great fun to ride, especially after you dial into its weird riding style. The Ural sidecar kit traces back to the Russian military in the early 1940s. The Red Army was looking for a reliable and agile mode of transport for its troops and ended up

copying the BMW R71 motorcycle.

They're still about today and have a loyal following. Having said that, they take a bit of getting used to. I managed to almost kill both of us two or three times and I think Russ was pretty happy to say goodbye to ours.

That was the last time I'd come across a

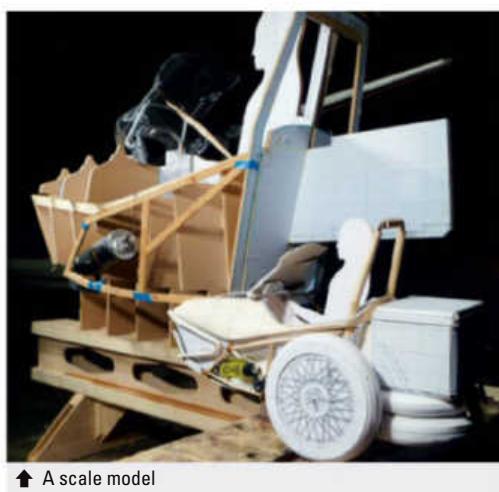


▲ So good it looks like a piece of BMW factory equipment!



sidecar outfit till a couple of years ago when I met Stephen Crowder from SBW Motorrad, a BMW dealership in Hertfordshire, UK. He told me about an interesting project he'd just finished and wondered if I'd like to pop around and have a look.

Taking pride of place in his showroom was a BMW R1200GS sidecar outfit looking like it was about ready to go around the world. Shod with knobbies, its suspension and chassis looked awesome. It actually appeared to me to be a factory-produced product. It must be a new



▲ A scale model

BMW project that's been a well-kept secret, I thought. Stephen explained that it was purely bespoke, not factory, and furthermore, in a roundabout way, it was all my fault.

He went on to say that back in 2011, a customer who, along with many others, had been inspired by *Long Way Round*, approached him. "Me and my wife want to go around the world on a GS," he said, "... and if two bloody daft actors can do it, then so can me and her indoors."

The only thing holding them back was a concern about overloading the bike, as they wanted to be as comfortable as possible on their adventure. They planned to travel for a couple of years and so they needed a solution to their luggage problem. The sidecar idea was born out of that conundrum.

SBW Motorrad was no stranger to bike preparation and round the world travel. They were the preferred dealer to prep Kevin and Julia Sanders' bikes. The couple is famous for record-breaking world travels and heading up the World of BMW international tours. With this pedigree, plus their own sidecar research, they pulled together a blueprint design that was pretty close to the mark.

There were a few key objectives that underpinned the design remit. The sidecar had to complement the R1200GS and they had to

look right together. The sidecar would use as many BMW GS parts as possible. This meant that components were already proven and spares were available worldwide. It was to be built as an adventure bike outfit — a round-the-world piece of kit that could go anywhere, and be robust and reliable.

Sketches and plans turned to miniature scale models that in turn evolved into full-size wooden replicas. When perfection was reached, moulds were made and production began. The result is a modern, sexy-looking bit of kit that's customisable and adjustable to suit your planned adventure.

Traditionally, sidecars have very little movement. This one, using suspension designed by Harris Performance (developers of GP race parts), can be raised or lowered depending on the terrain.

Stephen has sold several outfits now both in the UK and internationally. Each one is slightly different depending on customer preference, although they all share the baseline structure. Some options include fog lights, bashplates, soft-tops, GPS and even a barbecue rack and fridge. This one's heading to Australia!

So although it looked factory, it's not. It's innovative engineering from SBW Motorrad, in line with a level of quality and design that sits perfectly next to the GS motorcycle. It's clear from talking to Stephen Crowder that the whole project is led through passion and not money.

You can find out more by checking out the website or, if you managed to get to BMW's biggest bike festival — Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany — you'll have seen it on display. Maybe this could be the next big thing for adventure motorcycling. What do you think?

I'd love to hear about your exploits and your adventures. Maybe you've had a few sidecar experiences yourself? Remember you can give me feedback through the magazine — look forward to hearing from you.

Rubber side down. **ARR**

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Harris Performance Parts — [harris-performance.com](http://harris-performance.com)

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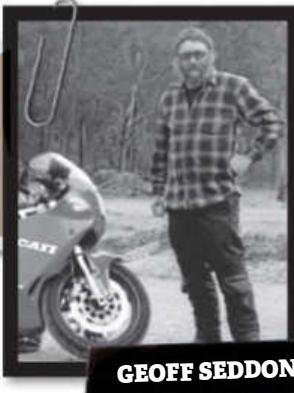


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# DUCKS ON THE POND

**W**hen I started riding, it was rare to see a girl on her own bike, although it was often hard to tell as they were forced to wear the same baggy Belstaffs the guys did. Motorcycling was in the main a boy thing and off-the-rack motorcycle gear for women was decades away. Today, it seems like every second rider is a woman, or maybe it's just the company I keep.

I've been hanging out with Sydney-based bike club, the Throttle Dolls, doing some research. Until recently, they were a three-girl crew but they've now opened their membership more broadly. Fuelled by social media, in particular Instagram, the Throttle Dolls are already a phenomenon, with members all over Australia and new chapters in Ireland and London.

The Dolls aren't the first women's bike club in Australia but I suspect they are the first to

wear lipstick. It doesn't help that spokeswomen and co-founders Nina Hoglund and Erica Valenti are easy on the eye, leading some detractors to question their authenticity, as if femininity and motorcycling were mutually exclusive.

I suspect that was the case 40 years ago, maybe even 20 years ago. The few women riders I did meet were either the tomboy daughters or adventurous partners of lifestyle motorcyclists. It was a prohibitively difficult hobby for a woman to get into on her own. Motorcycle shops were dirty, greasy places where blokes conducted their secret men's business, a world away from the pristine glass-walled palaces of today. It was difficult for women riders to be taken seriously and even rarer to be treated as equals, so it's no surprise the few that made it preferred to blend in rather than stand out from the crowd.

But that was then and Australia today is a very different place. A whole generation of girls have been raised to chase whatever dreams they like, and increasingly they are doing it on their terms.

The Throttle Dolls love their



bikes and just want to have fun, which seem to be the only entry requirements (apart from the obvious) to become a member. Their ranks do include some older experienced riders but many are new to the scene.

"Since we've been riding, it seems like there's someone new every day," Erica says. "There's definitely power in numbers; you see your friends get motorcycles and you want to get one too."

Some of their events are girls only, but others are open to all. I recently joined Nina, Erica and about 80 other riders for an informal Sunday morning ride from Deus Ex Machina in the city out to West Head. Maybe one third were women, the rest of us men

happy to spend some quality time in their company. It wasn't the fastest run I've ever been on but it was definitely the friendliest.

A month later I returned to interview Erica and Nina before they set off on a shorter women-only run along the southern beaches. The emphasis this time was less on the ride and more about catching up and sharing experience without know-it-all blokes butting in. As Erica says, "I've only had my licence a couple of years and there are so many things you want to ask when you start out. Today is an opportunity for women to ask those questions without feeling embarrassed."

"You learn every day," Nina adds. "So we give each other tips, help each other out and just talk about bikes and riding. It's nice to see the other girls joining us; we can do things like this as well, it's not just for the guys."

And with that, 30 Throttle Dolls fired up their bikes and lined up to head down busy Parramatta Road for their girls' day out. One of the more experienced riders on a Sportster waited for a break in the traffic, then blocked the lanes to allow them to proceed together. The last time I saw something like that was when I covered a Hells Angels run for *Live To Ride* magazine 25 years ago, only this time the riders were smiling and saying thank you.

More power to them, I reckon. **ARR**

■ Motorcycling is as it should be these days ...



**"A whole generation of girls have been raised to chase whatever dreams they like, and increasingly they are doing it on their terms"**

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ZOE NAYLOR

## Zoe takes the advice of a Superbike champ and heads off-road

**F**or my last column I interviewed three-times Australian Superbike champion Shawn Giles, who offered me some words of wisdom. "If you want to improve your confidence on a road bike, go and spend some time riding in the dirt." And so Shawn, you'll be pleased to know I have heeded your advice and spent the last couple of weekends hooning around friends' properties on a Yamaha TT-R230 dirt bike.

When I first sat on the dirt bike I was quite nervous. They're a lot slimmer and lighter than a road bike and don't feel as robust. As I ventured forth, my best nana driving impersonation came into play and I took it so easy on our friend's makeshift grass track it was embarrassing. I began traversing the undulating knolls doing no more than 20km/h at best.

I had no idea how much you bounced around riding this terrain. It was like the bike and I were riding turbulence together on an aeroplane. As I began to get the feel for it, I wasn't so afraid of all the movement and instead began to find it fun. I loved how the bike and I felt like one unit, bouncing along together navigating this terrain. It's something that I haven't connected with to the same degree when riding on the roads.

It feels as though there's a lot more suspension on a dirt bike. We recently had Top Dog

# GETTING DIRTY

**"Once you have that experience of feeling how much a dirtbike moves around, even if it's just on the grassy plains, it's wonderful to get back on a road bike and feel its sticky grip on the bitumen"**



■ Yamaha's TT-R230 is a great bike to hone your skills on in the dirt

suspension added to our four-wheel drive and I've noticed how much more give and bounce it has when driving through rocky terrain. It makes the ride more comfortable and a lot more enjoyable. I'm learning the same is true of a dirt bike.

Once I felt that this was the bike's natural place to be, I let go of the brake and gave a little more throttle. Woo hoo! Round we went, up and down, and slowly but surely I started gaining more and more confidence.

It becomes exhilarating feeling yourself bounce all over the place on a dirt bike. My body became limper and limper and relished the feeling of being thrown around a little bit. That was, however, until I hit some dirt!

All of a sudden I felt like I was

ice-skating — not like Torvill and Dean, but more like a first-time excursion to the skating rink. The bike was slipping and sliding all over the place and I panicked. I pulled on the brakes hard, which didn't help my predicament at all! In fact, it only made it worse. The bike began to slip around even more.

I pulled to one side to regain my composure while one of the more experienced dirt bike riders gave me a tip. He told me that although it goes against every grain in your body, the thing to do in the dirt or the sand is to speed up. Really give the throttle some gas and hang on. The bike will then skate through this terrain with more ease. I tried to do that a couple of times but my fear continued to get the better of me. By the end of the day I was much happier keeping to the

grassy terrain and steering clear of the rocky dirt.

Hmmm ... I'm really not sure how to conquer my fear of slipping in the dirt? What's even more humiliating is that kids a third of my age were fanning past me at a million miles an hour, making it look super easy!

Once you have that experience of feeling how much a dirt bike moves around, even if it's just on the grassy plains, it's wonderful to get back on a road bike and feel its sticky grip on the bitumen. You realise just how much you can throw the bike around without the fear of it losing its footing. It does help you build your confidence and feel more at one with the bike.

Thank you Shawn for the tip. And now I'm adding "mastering rocky dirt" to my bucket list! Til next time, safe travels. **ARR**

# 46

VR|46



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GREGOR REYNOLDS

**D**oes anyone else out there keep a record of how many kilometres they have covered on motorcycles? I don't mean a full-on diary of where you went, or the roads you travelled, just a record of how many kays you have ridden.

I started keeping track when I sold my second bike and I have been keeping a reasonably accurate log ever since.

Back then my aim was to ride a million miles on motorcycles. I knew it was possible, but I figured I would need plenty of opportunity and a fair dose of luck to last the distance. I have had both, and at last count I have covered about 1.96 million kilometres (1.21 million miles) since I started riding in 1971.

Keeping track was easy for the first 10 years. I bought a couple of bikes new so the speedo gave me the mileage, and I would only enter it into the log when I sold

# A MILLION MILES AWAY

the bike. When I bought a bike secondhand I would record the mileage when I bought it so I knew my kays when I sold it.

Things only got complicated when I started road testing in 1981. I wasn't so vigilant with recording mileages on test bikes, especially when they were coming thick and fast in the early days at *REVS* and *Two Wheels*. Sometimes I would go to update my log and find that I had 12 months of test bikes and multi-bike comparos to remember, so it is not deadly accurate. I may have fudged a few kays or forgotten a few over the years, but the tally is close enough for me.

You might think me strange for keeping track of this stuff, but I have always had an interest in figures, records and statistics so I keep my own. I know, for instance, that my biggest year was 105,000km (650 Bonneville and BMW R100RS) and there were several in the 60–90,000km range. Those years bumped the averages up to cover a few lean years of around the 20,000km mark. My highest tally in a week is 5200km (Suzuki V-Strom 1000) and my longest continuous day ride is just

over 1600km (R100RS).

Does anyone else record this type of thing or is it just me? Most of you would remember every bike you have owned, but recalling the mileage is tougher, depending on your age and memory. An approximate figure is fine for most people but I'm glad I wrote it all down. My whole motorcycle riding career is in there and I would have lost track years ago if I hadn't recorded it.

I'm not claiming any records by quoting these figures and I'm sure there are riders out there who have done more. Some of the older hardened rally-goers and Iron Butt riders would likely be over two million, but did anyone keep a tally? Let us know if you did. My records have been for me only (until now!) and they prompt my own special memories.

Looking back, some things are hard even for me to believe. Things like covering half a million kays on a succession of Triumph 650 Bonnevilles during the '70s and early '80s. Three actual bikes, but several engines and rebuilds. By far the most reliable was the 1970 model

which I rode for 126,000 miles (200,000km) requiring only one head job and one total rebuild in that time.

My BMW phase was just as productive. I flogged around a 75/5 as my second bike for years and rarely laid a spanner on it. Then came a new R100RS, a 75/6 and later a K100RS. The Beemers opened up a whole new world of mile-munching reliability to me, and they were great touring machines.

Thirty plus years of test bikes has been a highlight, of course. I love the variety, and having fuel and tyres supplied has eased the financial burden. I just feel privileged to have lasted the distance to experience them all and have a thousand memories. I have enjoyed the ride so far and I have no intention of stopping! Two million is only 40,000km away so I should be there in the next couple of years.

Why not drop us a line and regale us with tales of your total mileage and heroic rides? What are your records? I always get a kick out of your responses in Readers Rite. **ARR**

**I figured I would need plenty of opportunity and a fair dose of luck to last the distance and I have had both. At last count I have covered about 1.96 million kilometres since 1971**

■ If Gregor could space travel instead of riding motorcycles, he'd be past Jupiter by now ...





# NORTH



# ERN CAPER

Aprilia's Caponord 1200  
Touring may just be the  
pick of the three-bike range

■ The wheel sizes don't handicap you on decent gravel roads



**"The Aprilia fills the role of all-road sports-tourer beautifully if you happily acknowledge that its priorities are sealed roads with a high tolerance for dirt"**

**STORY: MICK MATHESON**

**PHOTOS: ANNE BAKER, MM**

**A**prilia has contributed to the burgeoning adventure-bike market by tripling its range of Caponord 1200s. This Caponord, the Touring, is now flanked by the Strada and the Rally. Before we look at the all-new Rally in all its adventure-seeking glory in issue #119, let's get some perspective on the one in the middle and see if it is, possibly, the nicest. Could it be the pick of the class for all-round value, features, performance and just tripping around the countryside? There are a lot of reasons why it may be.

The adventure-bike class is doing what motorcycling did: it's segmenting. "Adventure-bike" is a term I'm loath to use these days, although there's still little choice when you're trying to quickly describe any bike from the humble KLR650 to the famous R1200GS Adventure. The Caponord Touring is part of the most significant breakaway group in the

class, those who've embraced the advantages of modern tyre technology. They've recognised that a wide, low-profile 17-inch tyre provides better grip, steering and handling in almost every situation we ride in.

Yes, sure, we Aussies do like — even need — 19- or 21-inch front wheels to lead us where we dream of sometimes going. That's why Aprilia has built the Caponord Rally with its gravel-ready 19-incher. I have seen the light, though, and know that when 17-inch wheels are backed up by competent electronic traction control and clever ABS, they'll take you anywhere but the loosest of tracks and trails.

I learned that from the Ducati Multistrada, in particular those ones equipped with semi-active Skyhook suspension. That bike taught me a lot but the lessons came at a private-school price. The Caponord Touring, a bike that's equivalent to the Multistrada S, recites the same syllabus for about three-quarters of the price. At 23 grand ride-away, it'll leave you about \$7000 better off.



↑ A USB port under the seat permits charging of accessories



↑ The brakes are excellent, with great power and feedback



↑ Pointy back-end features an LED taillight



↑ Unlike the Strada, the Touring model has semi-active suspension with electronic adjustment

I rode away to some of my favourite back-country roads after picking up the Capo. The Aprilia's name means North Cape, a reference to the place that's popularly (though incorrectly) regarded as Europe's northernmost spit of land. It's so far up there you can see the midnight sun, and it's on the must-do list of destinations for adventurous Euro bikers. The North Cape seems even more exotic if you're from way down south in Italy, like the Aprilia is. The central west of NSW isn't quite the same, but I inferred from its name that the Caponord was keen just to get away.

The traffic didn't want us to go — I had to filter when I could. The Aprilia is as big as you'd want for city work but the width of the handlebars and panniers didn't slow me down too much. This is when I first experimented with the three engine modes available through the Aprilia's electronic package — a package

that comes standard in the ride-away price, not as an option. I'm sure the Rain mode's dull reaction would be the go on greasy low-traction streets, but I quickly flicked up to the Touring map, which brought much better throttle response without sacrificing smoothness. The Sport map was better again because I could zip into gaps on command and I didn't mind its more abrupt nature because I had no pillion to worry about.

While the steering's not quick, it becomes more direct if you use a bit of body English through the chassis, but as the road led us out of the sprawl and the traffic began to flow more steadily, I was able to appreciate the relaxed way the Caponord deals with things. Sitting up high, I could see ahead and started placing the Aprilia where I could make my way through the lanes of cars without varying my pace much at all.



↑ Good pillion grab handles double as luggage tie-down points



↑ Electronic suspension will set the preload according to the load

## THE NORTH CAPE CREW

There are now three Caponords in Aprilia's range. First in line is the \$20,000 Strada, which comes with ABS, traction control and engine mapping, but lacks the semi-active suspension, cruise control and panniers of the \$23,000 Touring model. Both have 17-inch wheels.

The new \$24,000 Rally model gives you more opportunity to get off the beaten track. It has all the electronics of the Touring but steps up with wire-spoked wheels, a 19-inch front tyre, aluminium panniers, protective plates and bars and more.

Those prices are all ride-away, unlike most other brands' prices we quote here. On-road costs in this price range are worth roughly \$2000 but do vary.



The V-twin engine is a lovely one. It's super-smooth for a V-twin but doesn't lack the traditional pulse you want with this kind of engine. I didn't have to give the clutch or gearbox a second thought — they're excellent. Soon the speed limits and traffic opened up a bit more and I realised this engine's tall sixth ►



■ When you get into it on the tarmac, 17-inch wheels give good traction



**GET THE APP!**

There's an app for the Caponord, utilised through the \$341 Aprilia Multimedia Platform (AMP) kit. It'll tell you exactly how far from the North Cape you are at any point in time. The other functions are less aspirational but much more relevant.

The bike's onboard trip meter is useful but the app brings some extra info, from fuel economy to lean angles. There are alternative dashboard layouts, a navigation screen and the contents of the owner's manual. You can activate a "find my bike" function to help you work out where you left it parked last night, and access a heap of other cool data.

The function that'll keep you glued to the app is the ability to record a route you've ridden, including all the telemetry, and review it afterwards. It's not just a mapped record of where you went, it's a revealing log of how you performed along the way.



↑ The app makes it all simple



■ It'd have to be a serious road closure to stop the Aprilia escaping the city's confines



gear lopes along just below the start of the go-zone at 100km/h, so there's always power there to push you on and strong drive is just a gear change away. With so much well-delivered bottom-end power, you can let top gear do all the work. Just like in town, the engine maps dictated the response, only now I preferred the Touring mode and its less on/off response to my right wrist. It became the mode I used most during the test. Out here, it was clear the Rain mode is 25hp below the other modes, another reason to avoid it unless traction was a problem.

The Capo has electronic suspension too. You can plumb for any of four specific settings: riding solo, riding solo with luggage, riding two-up, riding two-up with luggage; or you may take the seemingly lazy option and set it to automatically determine the best suspension calibration for you. The computer will set the rear preload according to the setting you've chosen, and adjust the damping to match. The semi-active nature of the damping means it'll constantly adjust itself in milliseconds to road surface anomalies.

You can clearly feel the difference going through the four predetermined settings. But you know what? The automatic setting was the surprise pick of them. It dials in preload until the bike is sitting level and balanced, then juggles the damping to match. It works a treat, and by the time I'd had a good play with each of the other settings, I gave up and left the Caponord's suspension in auto mode for the majority of the test.

The semi-active suspension takes other parameters as input besides suspension travel. The system also monitors throttle, front brake and wheel speeds to come up with its damping calibrations at both ends of the bike.►

## APRILIA CAPONORD 1200 TOURING

### QUICKSPECS

**Model:** Aprilia Caponord Touring  
**Price:** \$23,000 (ride-away)  
**Colours:** Red, grey, black  
**Warranty:** Two years, unlimited distance  
**Servicing intervals:** 20,000km  
**Engine:** Liquid-cooled, DOHC, 8-valve, 90° V-twin. Variable mapping, variable TC  
**Bore x stroke:** 106 x 67.8mm  
**Displacement:** 1197cc  
**Compression:** 12.0:1  
**Power:** 92kW @ 8000rpm  
**Torque:** 115Nm @ 6800rpm  
**Transmission:** Wet multiplate clutch, 6-speed gearbox, chain drive  
**Frame:** Steel trellis  
**Dimensions:** Seat height 840mm, weight 247kg (dry), fuel capacity 24L, wheelbase 1575mm, rake 27.4°, trail 118mm  
**Suspension:** Front, 43mm USD fork, adjustable damping. Rear, monoshock, adjustable damping and preload. Semi-active system with electronic adjustments  
**Brakes:** Front, 2 x 320mm discs, 4-piston calipers. Rear, 240mm disc, 1-piston caliper. Switchable ABS  
**Tyres:** Front, 120/70ZR17. Rear, 180/55ZR17  
**Fuel consumption:** 5.3L/100km  
**Theoretical range:** 450km  
**Verdict:** Very competent all-round traveller with a sealed-road bias

The Caponord's handling was great on tar and gravel. The only place I thought it could be improved was when I hooked into tight, twisty bits of tar, where the Aprilia felt more sports-tourer than sportsbike. It was a little soft and didn't give as much feedback as the more expensive Multistrada, but it's only a concern if you're worried about that last degree of sporty handling.

That's where the engine's gentler top-end performance comes into it too. The Capo is some 35hp down on the new DVT-equipped Multi. You do feel the difference but only



■ The Caponord Touring is a handsome machine and is also available in red or grey

**"By the time I'd had a good play with each of the other settings, I gave up and left the Caponord's suspension in auto mode for the majority of the test"**

when you're trying to pour on the power; the rest of the time there's ample acceleration — the Aprilia is fast, even if the 1200cc powerplant isn't tuned to the limit. There's enough grunt to challenge the great grip of the Dunlop Sportmax tyres, but then again there's traction control.

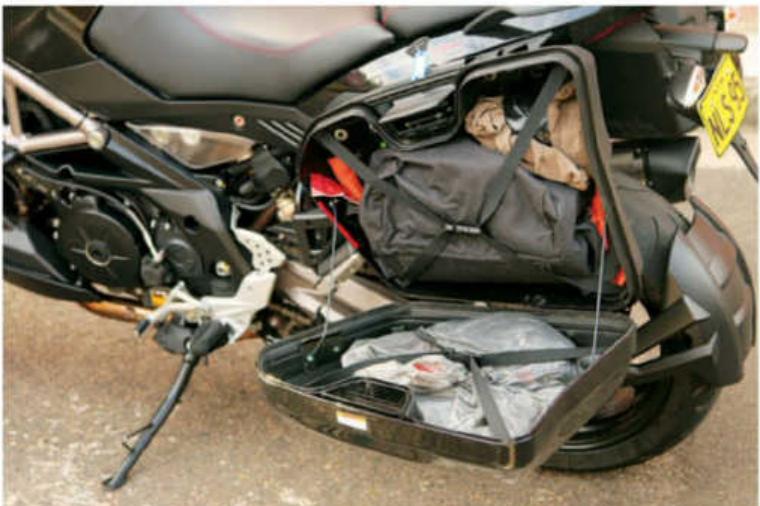
The TC has three levels of backup or can be turned off. The strongest TC setting is more controlling than an OCD-afflicted mother-in-law and best kept in reserve for, say, oil spills. Most riders will cruise around in one of the other two settings. However, even at its lowest

level of intervention, the Caponord's TC is active — no wheelies, no power slides to speak of. It's a much simpler system than the RSV4's, with fewer inputs from the machine. After a while, I turned it off when on decent gravel roads, in spite of the 17-inch wheels and their sporty rubber, because the TC was too sensitive for my tastes. I'd like to see a TC setting that caters to confident riders of gravel roads.

Same with the ABS, which is either on or off. There's no off-road setting. If you turn ABS and TC off the Caponord is fine, its excellent suspension and good dynamics serving it well ►



↑ The headlights look cool and offer class-average illumination



↑ Side-opening panniers with retaining straps will hold a good amount of gear

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## APRILIA CAPONORD 1200 TOURING



▲ LCD dash is comprehensive and generally legible for older eyes



▲ Arrow exhaust is an Aprilia accessory



▲ These seats are fantastic — perfect for long days in the saddle

■ The Caponord is good on the dirt, but is at its happiest on tar



on loose surfaces. There's so much feel in the brakes that you'd have to be ham-fisted to get into trouble with them, bitumen or not, and yet their power and bite are right up with the best.

So yes, the Aprilia fills the role of all-road sports-tourer beautifully if you happily acknowledge that its priorities are sealed roads with a high tolerance for dirt. And there's a lot

more to sweeten the deal. For starters, this is one of the most comfortable seats you'll find this side of a full-dress touring bike. It's not big but it's very well designed and nicely padded. You use as much of the tank's potential 450km as your concentration allows, have a quick stretch of the legs and you're ready to get back in the saddle, sitting comfortably behind the

wide handlebars, enjoying ample leg room and being surprised by how effective that small screen is. It's adjustable and the lowest position lets a good dose of cool air flow over you while the highest setting splits the airflow quite effectively. Overall, this is a very comfy bike to tour on. It's good on the back seat too.

Standard fittings include the colour-matched panniers, cruise control, handguards, a USB charging outlet, optional heated grips, and an all-LCD dash display that's full of info but lacks fuel consumption data. Heated grips are an option. The headlights are fair. The 20,000km service intervals are really good.

What stands out most about the Caponord is its commitment to getting its far-reaching role right. It hasn't stretched its skills in one area to the detriment of another, instead focusing on refinement, competence and comfort as an all-round tourer. It's adventurous enough without losing sight of what's most important to road riding. It will indeed carry you to the North Cape, no matter what the conditions. As for being the one in the middle? It's mid-range for ride-away price, mid-way up the electronic ladder, a mid-point between sportiness and tourability, but off-centre in the on-road/off-road balance. And if that's what you're looking for, I reckon the Caponord Touring is the nicest. **ARR**

■ Variable traction control will keep things in line for you, or you can turn it off



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# Stone the Crows

The best-selling model in the Moto Guzzi range has had a makeover, which will make it more popular than ever





**STORY: NIGEL CROWLEY****PHOTOS: TIM MUNRO**

**W**hat was I thinking? It was a long weekend on the East Coast and so, as tradition demanded, it was raining.

The prospect of the 400km ride I had planned was not filling me with a warm glow.

It was 4.30am when the alarm roused me from a fitful sleep to the sound of rain thrumming against the Colorbond. It had eased from the overnight deluge and no longer sounded like the windows were getting thrashed with pebbles.

Half-an-hour later, squinting through the steam from my second mug of Americano, the Guzzi made a bold statement under the harsh

**"It sat low, moody and very, very dark — echoing the sky outside — the occasional flashes of chrome serving only to emphasise its otherwise matte blackness"**

fluors in my garage. It sat low, moody and very, very dark — echoing the sky outside — the occasional flashes of chrome serving only to emphasise its otherwise matte blackness. It seemed a shame to get it dirty and I found myself wondering how well that finish might clean up down the track.

This is the second coming of the V7. Admirers will know this by the "II" on the side panels and a significant amount of updates over the previous model. First up there's a

six-speed gearbox replacing the five-speed of old. It's light underfoot, has a nice short throw, is accurate, and neutral is easy to find once it's warmed up a bit. You can even forgo the clutch once you're on the move if you fancy. Dropping into first results in an un-Guzzi-like click rather than a nasty clunk. The industrial-looking, unadjustable linkage fitted my size nines and the action isn't wearing over long distances or sustained urban cog-swapping.

For your \$14K ride-away you now also get



▲ Simple and elegant engine design



▲ The II on the side cover is the most obvious pointer to the new model



▲ Front end gets a bit soft when you are riding hard

ABS at both ends and traction control. Unlike on a sportsbike, neither of these systems is to enable you to go any faster and as such the only adjustment is to turn them off. What they do is make you go safer, and in that regard they are a valuable inclusion. In any case, unless you have arms like legs and can give that 320mm disc a harder squeeze through the four-pot radial Brembo than I could, the ABS will hardly be called on in dry conditions. In the wet it's a great safety net.

Even though both brakes lack initial bite, when used together they pull the 198-kilo V7 down quick. The effectiveness of the rear

brake is confidence inspiring and allows for aggressive use of the two-pot caliper. The low-slung nature of the bike and the extra weight of the shaft drive keeping the rear wheel pressed into the tarmac must help here.

With a claimed power output of 50hp (37kW) and 60Nm of torque, there's not enough grunt to cause the traction control to intervene in the dry via your right wrist. Throw in a few bumps mind you and the rather abrupt system will kick in, even in a straight line. Gassing it from a standstill can cause this to happen if you hit a catseye or pothole en route. Once you get to know the bike this isn't as intrusive as it

sounds, but I turned the *controllo trazione* off in the dry.

In the wet, particularly when cornering in town, the electronics will let the rear step out a little before activating. It's pretty good fun to play with once you've figured it out. The traction control is not an infallible get-you-out-of-trouble fairy, as the manual helpfully reminds us. "The limits of grip are determined by laws of physics, which even the Moto Guzzi *controllo trazione* system cannot overcome". Wise words indeed.

The last of the big changes is the engine tilted forward by four degrees to give better knee-to-cylinder-head clearance. I've experienced banging my knees on a Guzzi cylinder head before now and found the change more than welcome. Unfortunately, the flares in the petrol tank have now assumed that role and under normal riding I couldn't get my knees tucked in behind them. The optional rearssets would fix that.

As I rolled the Guzzi out of the garage (I know how to stay on the good side of my neighbours) I realised that sometimes miracles do happen: it had stopped raining. The roads were still soaked of course and, unlike the Guzzi, the sky had no bright patches, but it cheered me up.

Pressing the starter button elicited an almost comical cough from the slow-spinning starter motor before the engine fired up with that unmistakable Guzzi lurch to the right. Tickover is slow and erratic, causing the bike to dance around beneath you as if one cylinder is missing a beat every few revolutions. The polite, popping burble from ▶



## TWO MORE IIs

The other two V7 models are all based on the same basic platform as the Stone with varying components, style and appeal. They are priced at \$16,000ra for the V7 Racer and \$14,500ra for the V7 Special.



## MOTO GUZZI V7II STONE



the standard pipes won't offend anyone, even at stupid-o'clock in the morning.

The light, cable-operated clutch takes up almost instantly and when paired with a cold and lumpy engine there's a definite technique to getting off the line. With a seat height of 790mm, you sit in this bike rather than on it and, at a shade under six foot, I could easily get both feet flat on the floor. It carries its weight low, even when brimmed with a useful 21 litres of lead-free, making it feel unintimidating. Talking of which, it can fit through gaps you never imagined. Thanks to its narrowness, great balance and superb turning circle you can easily thread the needle through gridlocked streets.

With minimal traffic and the ABS and MGCT in their natural habitat, I splashed through Sydney's outer suburbs to the motorway in record time. I relished in the Guzzi's awesome intake roar while surfing the torque sweet spot for rapid and useful acceleration between three and five thousand rpm. Once on the freeway the bike is relaxing to ride and unless you're in a big rush there's no need to change down to make an overtake. For a proper go you'd best snick fifth or possibly fourth.

Being a big twin there's always vibration, but it's not intrusive or particularly tiring. It does blur the otherwise great mirrors to the point where you can't tell if the car behind has

### CUSTOMISATION IS KING

If you want a unique look to your V7, Moto Guzzi offers four customisation kits — the Dapper, Dark Rider, Scrambler and Legend. In total you can pick from 100 accessories to change the look of your bike.

The Dapper has a host of chrome and polished parts as well as single seat, drop

'bars and bar-end mirrors. The Dark Rider has similar components but in black and includes a small metal headlight fairing.

The Scrambler kit has heaps of things to tempt you, the most significant of which is a two-into-one high-level exhaust that changes the look of the bike. The kit also features serrated metal footpegs, uprated rear shocks

and longer mudguards.

Finally the Legend kit includes olive green or funky camouflage-painted bodywork to give the bike a military look, as well as heaps of luggage options. You can mix and match any of the components from any of the kits so creating a unique look is easy. Visit Guzzi's website to view what's on offer.





a roof rack or a light-bar, if you get my drift. Fortunately the excellent ergonomics allow you to easily cast a look over your shoulder.

The wide, one-piece seat is comfortable and flat. Its spaciousness allows you to alter your riding position considerably to keep numb bum at bay. With an average fuel consumption of 4.8L/100km giving a range of well over 400km, take it from my buttocks that you'll fancy stopping when the pessimistic fuel light comes on at about 300km.

Comfort is helped by the nicely damped suspension that soaks up all but the harshest bumps. At town speeds and when upright

it's more than adequate, but hitting bumps when cranked over is not its happy place. The preload-adjustable rear shocks usually maintain their composure but the skinny looking 40mm forks don't work well in this situation. They feel choppy and underdamped, lending a vague feeling to the front end and limiting how brave you can be when cornering.

The handling is pretty good though and even with its slightly lazy 27.5 degrees of rake, the steering is light and turn-in accurate. The chassis is good enough that on smooth surfaces you can ride this off the edge of the 130-section rear tyre without touching

anything down. Even though this is not a bike with sporty pretensions, on the open road you can still make very good progress.

Once off the freeway I found myself on some unfamiliar and still damp back roads and the V7 made more sense than ever. I still felt fresh, had loads of fuel left and was under no pressure to be the fastest bloke out there. I swooshed along at, and often under the speed limit, just taking in the view and relaxing into the next few hours of the journey.

I meandered up and down rolling hills, wound round lakes and cruised through tunnels of dripping trees as the sun made a ►



↑ The long comfy seat is good solo or with pillion



↑ Slick changes from this Guzzi gearbox



## MOTO GUZZI V7 II STONE

### QUICKSPECS

**Model:** Moto Guzzi V7 II Stone

**Prices:** \$14,000 ride away

**Colours:** Nero Ruvido and Rosso Impetuoso

**Warranty:** 2 years, unlimited distance

**Servicing intervals:** 7500km

**Engine:** Overhead valve, two-valve per cylinder 90° V-twin. Traction control

**Bore x stroke:** 80 x 74mm

**Displacement:** 744cc

**Compression:** 10.5:1

**Power:** 37kW @ 6200rpm

**Torque:** 60Nm @ 2800rpm

**Transmission:** 6-speed, wet multi-plate clutch, shaft final drive

**Frame:** Tubular steel bridge

**Suspension:** Front, 40mm telescopic, 130mm travel. Rear, twin shock, 100mm travel

**Dimensions:** Seat height 790mm, weight 198kg (wet), fuel capacity 21L, wheelbase 1449mm, rake 27.5°, trail 138mm

**Tyres:** Front, 100/90-18. Rear, 130/80-17

**Brakes:** 320mm discs with four-piston caliper. Rear, 260mm single disc with two-piston caliper. ABS

**Fuel consumption:** 4.8L/100km

**Theoretical range:** 438km

**Verdict:** A pleasantly capable retro machine with modern-day performance

**"Big kilometres hold no fear for this bike with its comfort, relaxing ride and excellent fuel range"**



futile attempt to break through the gloom. I got pelted with rain on several occasions and, just as I started to dry out, got pelted again. But you know what? I had a ball. It was one of the most stress-free rides I'd had in ages and I arrived feeling fresh, happy and wanting to do it all again. The bike performed brilliantly in this role and I developed a whole new respect for its quirky blackness.

I must admit, when I first set eyes on the V7, I assumed it would be a bit of a one-trick pony — an adequate commuter but perhaps not much else, its retro vibe beloved of bearded men in trendy coffee shops. To discover that it's not only a great town bike but also possesses some real long-distance ability was a revelation. Big kilometres hold no fear for this bike with its

comfort, relaxing ride and excellent fuel range. What's more there's plenty of room for two and accessories to help you carry stuff.

If I had my way, for performance it'd have better front suspension and wider tyres. For appeal I'd have louder pipes and spoked wheels. But even in standard get up it's impossible not to enjoy swinging a leg over this thing.

Coming from the UK, I can assure you I've had my fill of riding long distances in the rain, especially on bikes with no fairing. On the Guzzi it was a joy. If you're after a good-value all-rounder with bags of character and ability to match, then have a crack on a V7. You won't be disappointed. What's more, it cleaned up a treat. **ARR**



↑ The narrowness of the bike makes it great for commuting

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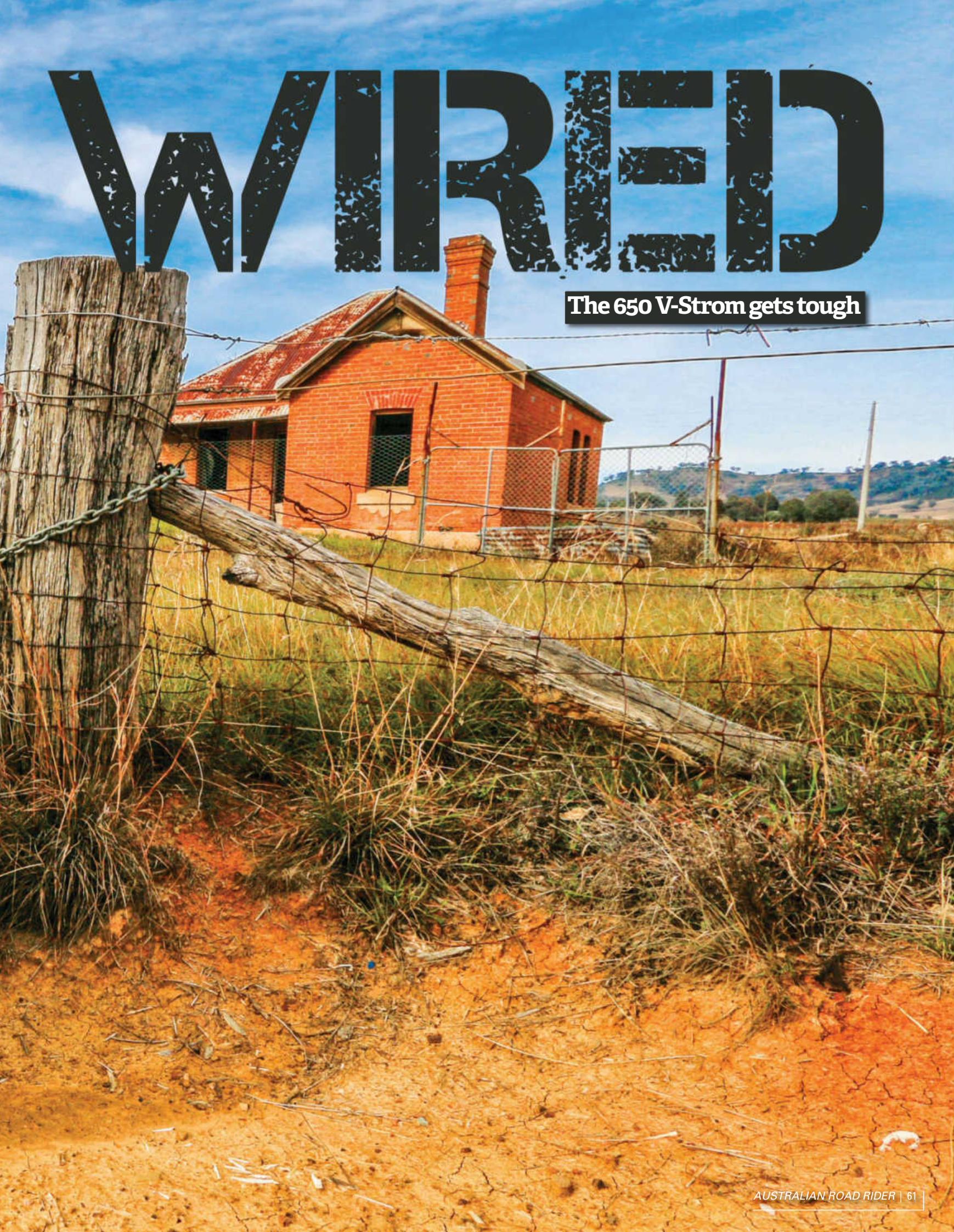
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SUZUKI DL650XT V-STROM

# I-HARD



# WIRIED

A photograph of a red brick building with a prominent chimney, situated behind a barbed-wire fence. The foreground is dominated by dry, cracked earth and a fallen wooden fence post. In the background, rolling hills are visible under a clear blue sky.

The 650 V-Strom gets tough

■ Engine guard is standard on the non-LAMS XT and projects the oil cooler



#### STORY: MICK MATHESON

PHOTOS: ANNE BAKER, MM

The mighty, mighty 650 V-Strom is one of the great achievers, an unassuming bike that does great things, but I found its weakness a few years ago. We pushed the Suzuki to the edge of its comfort zone and spent just a tiny bit too long there until our luck ran out. One moment all was well, the next I was standing by the roadside waiting for a ute to put the bike on. It was so disappointing to think I wouldn't be riding it again on that trip. I didn't know it then, but Suzuki would get rid of that weakness in 2015.

I'd been invited by a dirtbike magazine to help them out with a comparison of adventure-tourers ranging from the KLR650 to the Tiger 800. They didn't do "road bikes" very often but that didn't stop them fitting knobby tyres to the half dozen machines and heading way out west. We spent half a day on a big old cattle station, playing in the sand and the rocks. The V-Strom got right into it and even though most of its rivals led with skinny 21-inch front wheels, it showed the dirtbikers what you can do with a 19-incher. When eventually I rode the V-Strom out of the station's gate and on until we hit the tar road, I

**"It's a typical 90° V-twin but it's as smooth as a Triumph triple, enhancing comfort dramatically"**

felt really proud of what the Suzuki had done.

I quickly forgot about the massive rock I'd hit a few kilometres before leaving the station. It'd bottomed the forks and threatened to throw me off, but everything felt good again now. Besides, it had started raining and I was focused on maintaining traction as I peeled into a long, fast sweeper on the wet tar. That's when the front end began to feel awfully vague. Then it slid. Then it tucked. Flat tyre. Carefully, I nursed it off the road. Inspection revealed a massively bent rim. The cast aluminium wheel hadn't survived the impact with the rock. This bike wasn't going anywhere on its own feet today.

What a pity Suzuki didn't have the DL650XT back then. Its wire-spoked wheels would probably have made all the difference, and instead of having to retire injured from the comparison, the V-Strom would have been in with an excellent chance of scoring top points in the dirtbike mag's comparo. But that was





■ The screen can be bolted into any of three positions.



↑ Rack is big and flat, ideal for tying gear onto



↑ Crash bars save the tank from damage in a minor fall

then and this is now — and now we can enjoy the new strength built into the V-Strom range.

The V-Strom 650XT has been added to the lineup alongside the familiar cast-wheeled V-Strom. For the XT, having wire-spoked wheels is like wearing hiking boots instead of sneakers for a bushwalk. The little bit of extra weight is a small price to pay for the resilience, support and practicality you gain. And in another bit of clever thinking by Suzuki, these new wheels are designed for use with tubeless tyres. The XT also has a stubby beak just like the 1000cc V-Strom, steel crash bars protecting its flanks, a plastic belly pan protecting its oil cooler, and large handguards on the bars.

The other difference is the price, which is \$1200 higher than for the base-model V-Strom. The XT is otherwise just like the standard

650, right down to the size of the wheels and rims. Suspension travel and adjustability, chassis and engine are all the same — which is no bad thing. Why mess with something so successful?

The glamour gals in the mid-capacity adventure-touring class are the Triumph Tiger and BMW F-series. Until the V-Strom arrived, they were the multi-cylinder examples that offered wire-spoked wheels; everything else was either a single-cylinder or wore cast wheels. But if you wanted wire wheels on your twin or triple, the only option you had was a 21-inch and that's not something everyone wants. The V-Strom XT has a unique selling point in its 19-inch wire wheel.

The XT is also many thousands of dollars cheaper than the European equivalents. Sure, ►

## SHOULD YOU TUBE IT?

There's always been debate about whether to fit tubes inside your tyres before heading bush. Generally speaking, those with a roadbike background prefer tubeless and those with a dirtbike background prefer tubes. Who's right?

The anti-tube arguments go something like this: There's less weight without a tube; a punctured tubeless tyre goes flat slowly so you have plenty of time to react; a punctured tubeless tyre can usually be fixed in minutes without removing the wheel and tyre, just by plugging it.

The pro-tube arguments go something like this: A tubed tyre won't go flat if you badly dent a rim, and won't suffer instant deflation if and when such a dent is inflicted on the rim. You can change a tube that's been badly damaged, but not a tyre that can't be plugged.

That still doesn't tell us who's right. Let's look at other concerns.

If you fit a tube and get a flat, you'll have to remove the wheel (usually easy enough on any bike) and get the tyre off the rim — the latter being a bastard of a job on the side of the track. At least with a tubeless setup you only have to remove things if it can't be plugged. But then, that's only any good if you have a tube to fit, just to get you out of trouble, or a spare tyre, which is highly unlikely.

Both setups can deflate in an instant in the right circumstances so I don't buy into that argument either way.

That's still no answer, is it? And truthfully, there is no correct answer. In my experience, running tubeless without an emergency tube in your kit has the potential to leave you stranded. However, in my case that's never happened and, if it did, it'd be very rare that I wasn't in a position to somehow get the wheel to the next town to have a tyre fitted. Tubeless setups are usually quicker to fix when punctured, more convenient and more simple.





■ Water crossings or hairpin bends, the 650XT does it all

## THE LEARNER LEGAL ONE

Just like the standard V-Strom 650, the XT can be bought in full-power mode or detuned mode, the latter to suit the national Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme. The 645cc engine just squeezes in under the 660cc capacity limit for LAMS approval. The detuned model produces about 35kW, bringing it under the power-to-weight threshold.

In the LAMS market, the wire-wheeled V-Strom comes up against a range of single-cylinder bikes, most of which are lighter, have 21-inch front wheels and will do a bit better on rugged adventure rides. However, the Suzuki hits back with greater comfort, smoothness and torque, as well as the better tarmac performance of a 19-inch front wheel.



↑ The standard V-Strom 650 is available in learner legal trim too

## "Not everyone needs the XT's tougher nature, but it makes perfect sense here in Australia"

it's smaller, less powerful and a long way short of their advanced electronics, but that's a sizeable chunk of money you'll save. And as I found, the little Suzuki is in fact a real goer. It's one of the great achievers.

Take the engine. It's a typical 90° V-twin but it's as smooth as a Triumph triple, enhancing comfort dramatically. The power delivery is pretty linear and pleasantly strong. The powerplant doesn't hesitate under the weight of a pillion and rider, let alone with a lesser load of camping gear when you go away for a while. Get 4000rpm on board and you're into the meat of the engine's torque, which peaks at 60Nm by 6400rpm, while peak power of 51kW comes along at 8800rpm. That's a nice, wide powerband to dance the gears in before performance drops off on the way to the 10,500rpm limit.

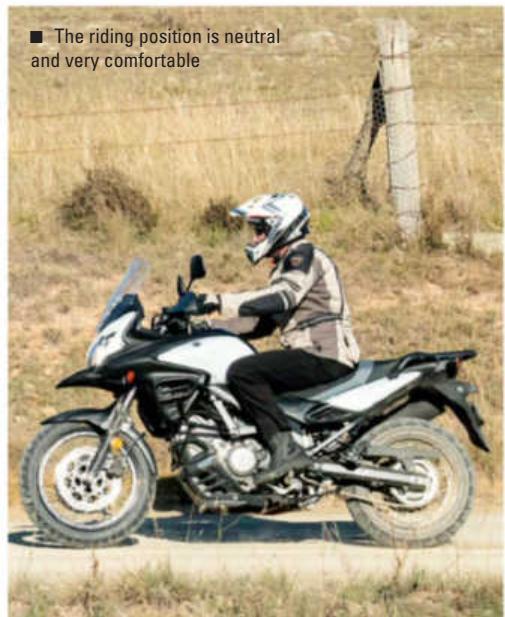
The smoothness and deceptive power lulled me into cruising well above the speed limit a few times when I wasn't paying attention. It's such a willing and easy engine it's not



■ Dash is simple and well laid out



■ The riding position is neutral and very comfortable



hard to do it. The 650 runs out of puff in the top end before the bigger 800s do, but you'll be up around 140-150km/h before you notice any deficiency. How often are those speeds important on these bikes? Down at license-preserving speeds, or the kind of pace you're usually doing on rough or unsealed roads, the V-Strom's grunt is always obvious.

The gear ratios are well placed to match it, and the light gearbox has a quick and positive action so you're never reluctant to keep the engine revving in its sweetest ranges.

Keeping up the momentum is easier thanks to great steering that has a hint of aggression to tip-in on the tar. The suspension's nicely controlled and firm, and the 19-inch front tyre gives you lots more grip and confidence than a 21-incher. This is a chassis you can trust and when you do it gives plenty back. The V-Strom's lighter weight compared with bigger bikes is a real benefit when you're hooking in on the dirt or tar. It's a flickable, responsive handler. The one thing that can hold you back

is traction — the Trail Wing tyres are not great on any surface. Even the V-Strom's 50kW is too much for the rear's grip on tar when you're gassing it out of a deep lean angle, though I've got to say it's not dangerous as much as just disconcerting.

The brakes are OK but nothing to write home about; you'd appreciate a little more strength from the front twin-piston brakes in an emergency stop, especially as ABS is standard in case you overcooked it. The ABS cannot be switched off when you're off-road, unfortunately.

Suzuki put a lot of effort into the 650 V-Strom's comfort and it shows. The riding position is perfectly balanced, with wide handlebars and lots of space. All I'd do is raise the bars for better control when I'm standing on the footpegs in rough terrain. Shorter riders won't complain, and they can reach the ground from the saddle with reasonable ease because of the narrow seat/tank section. The deep seat is fine for long trips too. Your pillion is also treated well, with a great seat, ample leg room ►

**QUICKSPECS****Model:** Suzuki V-Strom 650XT**Price:** \$11,490 (plus on-road charges)  
LAMS, \$10,990 (plus on-road charges)**Colours:** Pearl Glacier White, Metallic  
Matte Grey**Warranty:** 2 years, unlimited distance  
**Servicing intervals:** 6000km**Engine:** Liquid-cooled, DOHC, 8-valve,  
90° V-twin**Bore x stroke:** 81 x 62.6mm**Displacement:** 645cc**Compression:** 11.2:1**Power:** 51kW @ 8800rpm**Torque:** 60Nm @ 6400rpm**Transmission:** Wet multiplate clutch,  
6-speed gearbox, chain drive**Frame:** Aluminium twin-spar**Dimensions:** Seat height 835mm, weight  
215kg (wet), fuel capacity 20L, wheelbase  
1560mm, rake 26°, trail 110mm**Suspension:** Front, 43mm forks, adjustable  
preload, 150mm travel. Rear, monoshock,  
adjustable preload and rebound,  
159mm travel**Brakes:** Front, 2 x 310mm discs, 2-piston  
calipers. Rear, 260mm disc, 1-piston caliper.  
ABS**Tyres:** Front, 110/80R19 (59H). Rear,  
150/70R17 (69H)**Fuel consumption:** 4.9L/100km**Theoretical range:** 408km**Verdict:** A tougher and more practical  
version of this high-achieving  
middleweight**"Suzuki put a lot of effort  
into the 650 V-Strom's  
comfort and it shows"**

and secure grab handles.

The screen can be bolted into any of three positions. It's not a quick and convenient adjustment, but frankly once you've found your preferred height you rarely change it anyway. Four bolts do the job. It's a well-designed screen that parts the air effectively with minimal disturbance.

You get a big, flat rack on the back of the V-Strom that's excellent for tying gear to. Suzuki offers optional panniers and top box to expand the luggage capacity. Other accessories in the long list include a centrestand, taller screen, higher seat, tank

bag, heated grips and both a touring and adventure package.

Riders have built up impressively purposeful 650 V-Stroms for long-distance and often adventurous trips. One thing you don't need to spend money on is a larger tank — the stock one might look small but it's 20 litres. Now with the XT model's wire wheels and other practical components, you're closer still to starting off with everything you might want. Not everyone needs the XT's tougher nature, but it makes perfect sense here in Australia. Aussies have traditionally gone for the more hardcore models when the choice has been offered and the XT is a perfect example of why it's the way to go.

The 650 V-Strom has been one of the most popular and successful adventure-touring bikes for more than a decade. The XT will guarantee that remains the case. **ARR**



▲ Rear preload is adjustable without tools, using this knob



▲ Spokes mounted on outside of rim mean you can run tubeless tyres

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# MAXI

Suzuki's baby Burgman makes maxi scooting easy

STORY: MATT SHIELDS

PHOTOS: TIM MUNRO

**P**racticality is what makes scooters so appealing. For this reason, they are mostly utilitarian — a tool for commuters. Go to any city centre in Europe and you will see scooters by the thousand. Parked without concern, ridden like they are stolen, these commuter implements are for the sole purpose of getting from A to B. Maxi scooters, on the other hand, are not workhorses for the masses. They have a bit of opulence and typically their performance and handling make them a realistic alternative to a one-down, five-up tourer.

Maxi scooters are named as such not only because of their features, but also their size. This is an area where Suzuki's baby Burgman bucks the trend. Carrying the same name as its 650 Burgman sibling, the 200 has a lot of the features you expect of a maxi scooter but with a lot more simplicity that comes with smaller scooters.

It may be a maxi by name, but by size it isn't. The Burgman 200 is closely styled on the semi-auto 650, but tipping the scales at 114kg less, the 200 is an easier machine to handle.

For starters, the ergonomics make it easy. The low seat height, at 735mm, slim bodywork and scalloped footboards allow for the most direct path to the ground for riders' legs. Short

## QUICKSPECS

**Model:** Suzuki AN200 Burgman

**Price:** \$5490 (plus on-road charges)

**Colour:** Cool Silver

**Warranty:** 12 months, unlimited distance

**Servicing intervals:** 5000km

**Engine:** Liquid-cooled, SOHC, single

**Bore x stroke:** 69 x 53.4mm

**Displacement:** 200cc

**Compression:** 11.0:1

**Transmission:** CVT

**Frame:** Steel trellis

**Dimensions:** Seat height 735mm, weight 161kg (wet), fuel capacity 10.5L, wheelbase 1465mm, 27° rake, 92mm trail

**Suspension:** Front, 33mm forks, 92mm travel. Rear, twin shock, adjustable preload, 83mm travel

**Brakes:** Front, 240mm disc, 2-piston caliper. Rear, 240mm disc, 1-piston caliper

**Tyres:** Front, 110/90-13. Rear, 130/70-12

**Fuel consumption:** 3.5L/100km

**Theoretical range:** 300km

**Verdict:** A budget-priced maxi packed with great features

# SMART



**"Carrying the same name as its 650 Burgman sibling, the 200 has a lot of the features you expect of a maxi scooter but with a lot more simplicity that comes with smaller scooters"**

riders will appreciate this as many other maxi scooters can be a lot of machine to handle even at a standstill. Comfort wise, taller riders will be locked in to the Burgman's seating position. The seat is too short and needs a bit more length for some comfortable variation.

A maxi scooter typically means speed and effortless touring ability. While a 200cc fuel-injected engine might seem like it won't cut it, it does. On the open road you can lose your

licence on the 200. Stability at high speed is excellent and fuel consumption a miserly 3.5L/100km for a 300km range. The fairing keeps the air off you at speed and, combined with the front section of the footwell, there is enough coverage to keep you dry in light showers.

Where the engine and CVT gearbox excel are in low- and medium-speed situations. The 200 rockets from the lights and engine response at speed is sharp. There is barely a hint of snatch



as the CVT engages and it is extremely smooth in its function. It's as good around town as it is on the open road, and that's not something you can say about many maxi scooters.

The same all-round capability exists with the chassis. Around town it is sharp and nimble cutting through traffic. On the open road there is a sporty nature to the chassis through this fast turn in, but if you find a bump it'll track over it with barely an upset to its trajectory.

Although the rear twin shocks have only preload adjustment, they deal well with the

lump of engine and transmission swinging off it. The front end soaks up bumps nicely and deals with abrupt weight transfer equally well. The chassis balance is set towards being a sharp tool around town, but this doesn't harm its performance on the open road.

One place where more could be asked of the Burgman is its brakes. The twin-piston front and single-piston rear caliper on 240mm discs have excellent power and feel. But it lacks ABS, which would be of great benefit in the Burgman's inner-city environs.

The Burgman 200 ticks all the boxes in



↑ Exhaust is quiet



↑ Fuel filler is located between seat and footwell



↑ Pillions won't have a problem holding on

terms of performance, but what can't be forgotten are the luxuries that the Burgman 200 comes complete with at its price point of \$5490. There are 41 litres of storage space under the seat and a further seven litres in three compartments around the handlebars. What's more, there's a boot light, accessory socket and a quite comprehensive dash display. It's this attention to the details and ease of use that make the Burgman 200 a scooter for around town or on the open road. Best of all, it'll do what you want and make it easy. And that's a big ask from many other maxi scooters. **ARR**



↑ Dash is comprehensive



↑ ABS would be a nice addition to the 200



↑ Rear shocks have preload adjustment



# THE LONG LIST

**More luggage and protection are the order of the day.  
And, after 7000km, a thorough clean and polish...**

The short snippet of dream that stuck in my mind when I woke up the other day was of a BMW tank bag that was gappingly over-sized, and I was looking into it as it seemed to grow more until I reckon I could have curled up inside it. I'm not one to read much into dreams, but this time there might have been something in it. The day before I'd fitted a tank bag to the long-term R1200RT and so I suspect the dream was connected with my increasing the bike's already capacious luggage space. I've told you how I can have trouble filling up both panniers and the top box for a trip away, and at least one reader has quipped about having "so much crap" on the bike, and yet I go adding another bag to the circus. Why?

Why? Because it's there, of course. Or because I can. Or, if you prefer a reasoned argument, because tank bags are exceptionally convenient inventions that keep a bunch of frequently needed things in front of you, where you can get to them without dismounting.

There's perhaps a fourth reason: the "crap" comment has been niggling at me, encouraging me to ditch the top box when it's not required, but I still want somewhere to carry "stuff". Oh, and fifth: as Anne and I are about to go away for a week together on the BMW, the more luggage space we've got, the better!

I do like tank bags, provided they don't get in the way. When BMW introduced me to the RT on its launch there was a tank bag fitted, and it fitted me. The design is perfect — it's not too big, yet swallows a camera, phone, map, bottle of water and more without bulging at the seams. It's weatherproof, it sits securely on a clever mounting system, and it has a contoured base that matches the curves of the tank.

Fitting it was easy. The front strap bolts to the chassis just behind the steering head, demanding the only tool for the task, a Torx driver. The pair of straps at the rear of the bag are anchored under the seat using webbing loops and a stick-on Velcro pad. I made sure the surface that the pad adheres to was clean





and gave it 24 hours to settle in, as per the instructions. If I don't want to use the bag, I can unhook it and remove the straps of the anchor system in a couple of minutes.

The bag is 11 litres in volume — not quite the stuff of my dream, but that's a good thing!

### TAKING THE KNOCKS

Maybe the folks at BMW Motorrad Australia are getting nervous, because they emailed me to say they were sending me some other accessories for the long-terminer: protective covers for the valve covers and panniers. Were they expecting me to let it fall over? Actually, their fears were well-founded.

It's not that I fell over, not at all. It's more the fact that I'm worried, too, after the local council came and did some work on the dirt road I live on. For the first time in history, they actually sheeted it, that is, they gave it a special, harder gravel surface. In most ways that's been an incredible improvement. There are far fewer potholes and they're tiny compared with what was there before. The surface is a lot gripier too. But when it rains, it's slicker than a Teflon fish. Even with traction control and ABS, it's like riding a

**"After 7000km — some of them in filthy conditions — the bugs and dirt had built up in spite of regular washes. Mate, talk about baked on!"**

knife edge if there's water on it.

So I happily fitted the protective covers when they arrived. They're the kind of thing that most people will have their dealer fit but if you want to tackle it yourself it's not hard.

The valve cover protectors are steel with rubber padding, and nestle under the alloy covers. Three bolts hold them there and they look like they'll do their job easily. No, they're not going to miraculously save the bike in a major crash, but they should prevent any scarring or cracks if the big tourer falls over at low speed. The shape and colour of the protectors enables them to blend in nicely with the bike and so they're quite subtle, which I like. Fitting them required two Torx drivers and a spanner. Before fitting them, I thoroughly cleaned the valve covers of dirt and bug splats because the rubber liner presses hard against it and I'm sure it'd mark the finish of the cover if there was anything between them.

The rubber strips for the panniers are stick-on pieces, so I gave the panniers a detailed clean too. Templates provided with the protectors help you place them exactly where they should sit, and the adhesive needs 72 hours to properly cure. Like the valve-cover protectors, these are going to be effective in low-speed impacts. The lower strip will help if the bike falls over; the upper one is there to prevent damage from anything that runs into the pannier ... or anything you run into.

I sincerely hope I never get to tell you how well they work!

### CLEAN START

The need to clean the valve covers and panniers set me off on a mission over the whole bike. After 7000km — some of them in filthy conditions — the bugs and dirt had built up in spite of regular washes. Mate, talk about baked on! I put a few hours into it and still have more to do. There are some fiddly areas on this bike, and the matte-finished black plastic doesn't easily give up the residue of dead bugs, but for some reason even the paintwork isn't easy to get the last traces of grime from.

I'm using quality cleaner, wash and polish. I'll get there eventually. And when I do, I'm going to give the whole thing a good coating of wax to see if that takes the hard work out of it next time.

— MICK MATHESON

UK TO MONGOLIA

# LAND RO



# VERS



**Got the hunger and drive to do a trans-continental trip but don't know where to start? Here's how Malcolm and Sara did one of the biggest land crossings of them all**

STORY AND PHOTOS:

MALCOLM GLOVER AND SARA ELDIB

**W**hen you first tell someone that you rode a motorbike from the UK to Mongolia, the typical response is one of awe. "Surely you must be awfully brave, awfully skilful, awfully rich, or awfully stupid to even think about doing such a 'crazy thing,'" are the responses.

Yet the reality is much simpler than most people would expect. A small dose of skill is useful and some dollars in the bank are handy too. But the only thing you really need to travel through remote corners of the world on two wheels is the hunger to do it and the drive to make it happen. Everything else has a way of somehow falling into place — partly through hard work, partly through good planning, sometimes just through plain good luck.

Such was our experience on our 25,000km ride from my hometown of Arbroath in Scotland to Ulaan Bataar, Mongolia. ►

■ THE Wakhan Corridor, Tajikistan, with the Hindu Kush in the distance.



▲ Kyrgyzstan living up to its reputation as the 'Switzerland of the Stans'.

## THE ROUTE

The route we chose was based on three key considerations: security, scenery and visas. In the end, we chose the under and over option: under the Black Sea, over the top of the Caspian Sea into the Stans and then a skip through the Altai region of Russia into Mongolia.

Although not the shortest route, going this way ticked a number of our "like to see" boxes. The Croatian coast, the mountains of northern Greece, Gallipoli and Cappadocia in Turkey, and the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia were all along the way. Taking this route allowed us to avoid the potential visa hassles of Turkmenistan, the unreliable ferry crossing over the Caspian, and the unfolding conflict in the Crimea.

On the down side, this route also meant we missed out on the hospitality and scenery of northern Iran and got the monotony and desolation of the Caspian Depression.

## THE BIKES

"Basic is best" is definitely our motto when it comes to overland bikes, hence two old-school air-cooled thumpers were our rides. One was a 2002 Yamaha XT600 and one a 1999 Suzuki XF650 Freewind. While not the most obvious choice, the Freewind was as

close as we could get to a DR650 in the UK.

Despite Sara's misgivings about "all that plastic", the 19-inch front wheel and questionable aesthetics, the Freewind coped with everything thrown at it. From washed-out riverbeds to two-up trips up mountain tracks, remote highways and windy

mountain roads, the Freewind did it all. And it did it with luxuries like a comfy seat, fuel gauge and centrestand that DR riders can only dream of. Like the Freewind, the XT600, too, did everything that was asked of it, just with a few more vibes and a little less blacktop panache than the Freewind.



## THE TRIP IN NUMBERS

**Weeks:** 16

**Continents:** 2

**Countries:** 20

**Punctures:** 3

(all on the front of the XT)

**Distance:** 25,000km per bike

**Dollars:** \$8000 each including visas, bikes, accommodation, fuel, food, bribes ...



■ Cave dwellings at Cappadocia, Turkey.

**BACK-UP ON-BOARD**

**Tubes:** none used  
**Chain and sprocket kit for the Freewind:** not used  
**Globes:** not used  
**Clutch cables:** not used  
**Brake pads:** not used  
**Wheel bearings / sprocket carrier bearings:** not used  
**Oil filters:** used

**"If no road leads to where you want to go, simply start your own. If the road you're on is too bumpy or sandy, start another one alongside."**



↑ Still officially in Europe... but starting to feel a long way from home.



■ Heading for the Pamirs in Tajikistan



↑ Puncture No.2... why does it always happen to me?

**BIKE PREP**

In terms of bike preparation, we kept the mods as basic as the bikes themselves. The modifications were homemade alloy panniers on the XT600 plus a long-range tank that came with the bike. On the Freewind there were homemade racks and a pair of dusty old throwover panniers for preparation. GPS was rejected in favour of old-fashioned maps and a belief that getting lost is part of the adventure.

Despite the age of the bikes and the lack of preparation, neither bike caused any serious issues. The Freewind was particularly reliable, arriving in Ulaan Bataar with nothing to show for its ordeal other than a worn-out chain and a digital speedo that had succumbed to the vibrations.

The XT suffered a fractured Hepco and Becker luggage rack that was quickly repaired in Dushanbe. There was an intermittent fuelling issue probably related to dirty black-market Uzbek fuel. Both bikes did their makers proud and to the best of our knowledge are seeing out their days carrying tourists on biking adventures in Mongolia. ▶



■ Rolling through Mongolia

**TOOLBOX**

Standard toolkits  
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■ Mum's house ...  
Arbroath, Scotland and  
two very shiny bikes.



■ Leaving Europe  
behind as we head  
into Turkey

## THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY – THE BIG RIDE

Some days on the road are always going to be better than others. It's these days we daydream about months later when we're remembering what it was like to live a life less ordinary.

Of course, some days are a lot worse than others, and these days, too, are difficult to forget. The bad days also end up remembered fondly, as if the bad days somehow make the whole endeavour feel more worthwhile or hard earned. Here are some of the highlights and lowlights of our journey.

■ Nearing the end of a long day in the saddle, high up on the Pamir Highway, Tajikistan.



Like most bikers, we were drawn to the prospect of riding through some of the most dramatic mountain ranges in the world. From the famous hairpins of the Stelvio Pass in the Italian Alps to the snow-capped peaks of western Mongolia, a big part of our route selection was influenced by the mountain ranges we wanted to see along the way. And not forgetting the remote and tortuous tracks that would take us across some of them.

After enjoying the European Alps and the mountains of northern Greece, the next big mountain range on our radar was

the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia. The Caucasus Mountains form a natural barrier between Georgia and the Russian Federation. They contain the highest peak, Mt Elbrus, in continental Europe and there is only one road across the mountains. Built by the Russians, the Military Highway was blocked by a massive landslide that killed a number of truckies only weeks before we passed through it.

Before this, though, we took the opportunity to ride the beautifully paved road to Mestia and the very unpaved continuation of this road to Lentekhi. Both roads were

■ The perfect camp spot on the shores of Issyk Kol, Kyrgyzstan.



■ Lunch on the road with the Mongols ... burning dung to keep the billions of biting beasties at bay.



■ Uber-X, Kyrgyzstan style.



## "One young man called Yaroslav took a day off work to show us his city and sort out our paperwork at the immigration office. We may still be in Russia if it wasn't for him!"

awesome in different ways — the first for its peg-grinding twisties and high-altitude scenery, the second for its remote, muddy, bumpy, rocky and dusty trails. So tough was this road it made a 100km day seem like hard work. Our ride to Mestia was made all the more interesting by our first experience of the

region's vodka-based hospitality.

Following an oil and filter change in the beautiful Georgian city of Tbilisi, our ride north along the Military Highway lived up to our expectation. The roads were beautiful and mountain scenery amazing. Our last night in Georgia was spent toasting everything with a

bunch of local fellas in a very shiny Hummer, who invited us to stay with them at their mountain retreat. Looking back on it, it sounds like a recipe for a kidnapping. But as usual, we trusted in humanity and our judge of character and had a great time.

Following the highs of the Caucasus Mountains, we plunged down into the vast plains of the Russian Federation then down further into Kazakhstan and the Caspian Depression. We never did find out just how depressed this depression was, but boy was it flat, and hot, and oh so dull, in an exotic, "hey, we're riding in Kazakhstan!" kind of way.

The Caucasus Mountains suddenly seemed a million miles behind us and our next mountain range was the Pamirs. When the seemingly interminable Kazakh Steppe finally changed, it did so only by giving way to the barren, scrubby and flat desert of Uzbekistan. At times, we began to question if we would ever see a mountain again. The only thing stopping us falling asleep was the huge potholes that appeared from nowhere just to keep us honest. This was maybe the toughest section of the trip: hot, dry, flat and very, very monotonous.

Eventually, though, the straight, flat roads brought us to the fabled Silk Road cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. It was then on to Tajikistan and the start of the Pamir Highway. This is just one section of the ancient Silk Road and the second-highest highway in the world, with a maximum elevation of 4655m at Akbaital. Nowadays the road carries an ever-increasing number of Chinese trucks destined for the markets of the Stans, Russia and even Turkey. Because of this the Chinese have spent big on sealing the road surface. Judging by the frost-induced "big dipper" undulations that have developed in a few short years, they may have to spend even more to maintain it. ►

■ Camping in Kyrgyzstan: what would we do without two minute noodles?





↑ The Mestia to Ushguli 'road' in Georgia... one day, 100km, lots of fun.

■ Meeting the incredibly friendly Kyrgyz locals.



■ Hitting the road again in the Silk Road city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan.



**"By now Scotland felt like a long, long way away, and a little bit of pride crept into our thoughts. Not only were we proud of what we had achieved ourselves, but what our previously unloved and ultra-basic bikes had achieved"**

From Khorog, we initially chose to continue south, skipping the first section of the Pamir in favour of following the Panj River. The Panj forms the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Only 100km along was the Wakhan corridor and incredible views of one of the most impressive mountain ranges on the planet — the Hindu Kush, or literally "Killer of the Hindus". Every kilometre or so we would stop to gaze at the views of the towering peaks, on the other side of which lay Pakistan.

By now Scotland felt like a long, long way away, and a little bit of pride crept into our thoughts. Not only were we proud of what we had achieved ourselves, but also what our previously unloved and ultra-basic bikes had achieved. Who needs a shiny new GS, eh?

Despite the frequent stops, we found our way along the rough dirt road that follows the border and back to the main Pamir Highway. On the way, we met a cyclist grinding his way up a steady incline. He was already into his second year on the road, having started in Melbourne, and was heading for home in Belgium. Unlike us, he had no particular

timetable and no particular plan. It was hot and late in the day, at high altitude with little or no natural water, but he was happy and friendly and clearly in no rush. It was a reminder that just when you start to think you're hardcore, someone comes along who makes you look anything but!

Back on the Pamir Highway, the XT600 was noticeably down on power. It nearly met its match at the Ak-Baital Pass (4655m), where it coughed and wheezed its way over the top in first gear and at walking pace. The Freewind, on the other hand, was oblivious to the 4000m cruising altitude and didn't pause for breath.

Needless to say, the mountain scenery was truly spectacular. At the same time, the desolation and isolation gave us a healthy respect for those who struggle to live here. Back in the communist days, this area was supported by the military presence protecting the border. Since the breakup of the union, the support from Moscow has evaporated and people here have had to find other ways of supporting themselves. How and why they continue to do it, and how they survive the ►

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indescribably fierce winters, is difficult to fathom.

After "conquering" the Pamir, our route took us through Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and then the beautiful Altai region. Finally we arrived at the north-western border of Mongolia.

Mongolia had long been on our minds. We'd heard tales of incredible beauty, hospitality, and boundless opportunities for "proper" off-road riding. We'd also heard of tough riding through mud, sand, deep river crossings, endless days of rain, and navigation challenges that would stretch Marco Polo. Most people we had spoken to thought we were bonkers to be riding in Mongolia without GPS.

We were excited to have arrived when we crossed the border. Finally we were on the verge of finding out for ourselves if everything we had heard was true, or if the "real" truth lay somewhere in the middle. As we had found with other destinations, most of the good reports we had heard were spot on, while the tales of hardship and woe were somewhat exaggerated. Oh — and we proved that you definitely don't need GPS to go exploring in Mongolia! ▶

Admittedly the weather was kind to us; in our two weeks in Mongolia we had two days of light rain. We had many river crossings and occasional stretches of muddy roads, so it was easy to see that things could be much more challenging under different circumstances. Also, while we endured some stretches of sandy road, they were no more than a nuisance at worst. No doubt we were helped by being on bikes which were both light on their own and lightly loaded.

As for the good reports we'd heard, Mongolia definitely lived up to all of them. In the west, the snow-capped mountains are high and dominating, with crystal-clear lakes and rivers nestled in the valleys. As you move east, the

mountains slowly give way to rolling hills. While the landscape changes, the friendliness of the locals, opportunity for riding off-road, changing road conditions and feeling of isolation is constant.

Having ridden in almost 40 countries around the world, Mongolia ranks as one of the highlights. The only limitations on where you can ride are the physical limitations of you or your bike. There are precious few fences to get in your way, and land ownership seems to be a foreign concept. If no road leads to where you want to go, simply start your own. If the road you're on is too bumpy or sandy, start another one alongside. Ride up a mountain if you want, or through a river, or around a lake, or up to ▶



▲ First puncture of the trip in Northern Greece... working out how to fix it without removing the wheel.



■ Western Mongolia: Lakes, mountains and unbounded freedom to explore...

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■ The Freewind ploughs on into Kyrgyzstan from Tajikistan

those woods in the distance. It's a bit like the old Wild West of the Far East: the sensation of freedom and space is almost overwhelming.

You can camp where you want, too, and (as happened to us) the local herdsman will come to say hello. Later, he returned with some homemade cream and cheese. In the morning we were invited to join the locals in their cosy yurt for morning tea, more cream, homemade bread, and even a surreal game of Connect 4.

For many reasons, Mongolia was the highlight of our UK to Ulaan Bataar journey, but not alone in providing us with lasting memories. Away from the mountain ranges that underpinned our route, we were blessed to witness changing cultures across countries and continents. We learned more about the Turkish side of the Gallipoli story, as well as seeing places such as Lone Pine and The

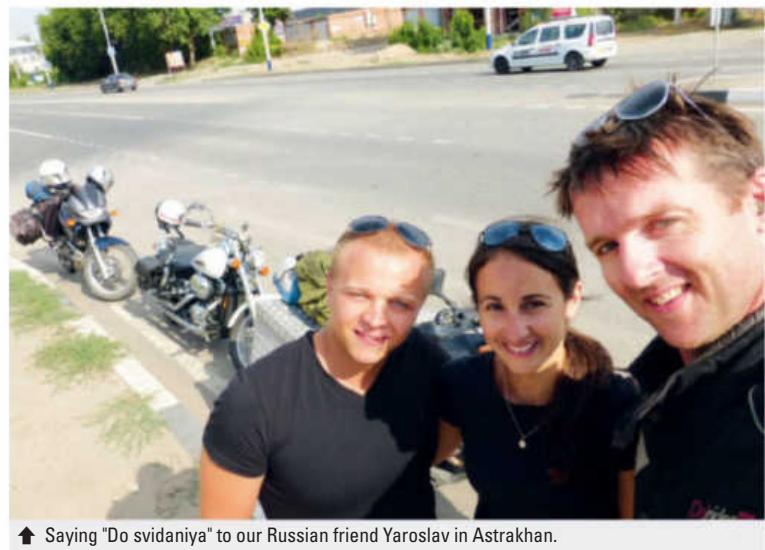
Nek. We flew in a hot-air balloon across the otherworldly landscape of Cappadocia and soaked in the stunning history and Islamic architecture of Samarkand and Bukhara.

But across all the different countries and cultures and religious groups, the one constant was the warmth and generosity of the people we met. Until you travel off the beaten path, away from the typical tourist haunts, it's difficult to appreciate just how kind and generous most people are. From the Turkish family who invited us into their house for lunch after we stopped to ask directions, to the young student in Tajikistan who insisted we stay in his family home overnight, it was a humbling experience.

Everywhere we went, people wanted to help us, to find out where we were from, or to say hello. In Uzbekistan, people waved

and cheered at us as we rode past and buses honked their horns. In Russia, border officials fed us cake and tea. One young man called Yaroslav took a day off work to show us his city and sort out our paperwork at the immigration office. We may still be in Russia if it wasn't for him!

So while the mountains provided the inspiration for our route selection, it was the people we met who made the biggest, and possibly the longest-lasting impression on us. These days, it's all too easy to be cynical about humans. If, like us, you sometimes despair at the direction the human race is going in, jump on your bike and go for a ride. Chances are you'll see a different world to the one on the news, a world populated by people whose generosity and kindness will blow you away. **ARR**



▲ Saying "Do svидани" to our Russian friend Yaroslav in Astrakhan.

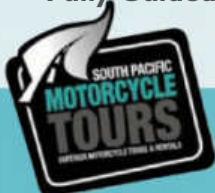


■ Enjoying the French Alps

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# THE LO

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# NG SSON

**Taking on your first multi-day adventure will teach you a lot of lessons along the way**

**STORY AND PHOTOS: BENNETT RING**

**B**efore this trip, my longest ride had been a full-day blast from Sydney to Melbourne on my trusty Kawasaki VN250 Eliminator. It gave the little 250cc engine quite the work-out!

This new ride was to be totally different — a three-day epic from Melbourne up to the NSW border, cutting in over the Great Dividing Range back to Melbourne.

With my brother in tow, we headed out on Victory Hammer S and Judge demo bikes as part of the Victory Weekend Escape program.

What follows are the lessons I learned about a trip of this length. And trust me, there were many lessons to learn.

**RULE 1: GET ROUTE ADVICE**

As a newcomer to Victoria, I had no idea where to ride. With Google Maps I plotted a course from Mount Martha up to Anglers Rest on day one, Tumbarumba on day two and back to Melbourne's CBD on day three. A total distance of 1439km.

The blue squiggly route line on Google Maps looked like it had the requisite number of

twisties to keep the ride interesting. The route wound through scenic bushland and national parks. Posting the route on an internet forum had many friendly forumites pointing out that many of the roads were unsealed. This was not something that the road-bred cruisers we were taking would enjoy.

One forum user suggested an alternate route, which stuck to the black stuff for the entire way. Perfect. This new ride would see us heading to Cooma, NSW, on day one, then over the Australian Alps to Albury on day two, with the return to Melbourne on day three. ►



## RULE 2: FIGURE OUT YOUR GPS BEFORE YOU GO

Now that I had the route, it was time to import the Google Maps itinerary into my Android phone's Google Maps GPS. Problem was I couldn't.

After five hours trawling the internet while pulling my hair out and spending 70 bucks on a GPS app, I discovered that there is no way to export an itinerary from Google Maps into any Android phone GPS. It was only after the trip that I discovered the Tyre To Travel application that makes plotting and exporting itineraries a breeze. To get around this, I created a list of the main towns we'd visit and upon hitting each one, I'd plot the next into my GPS — a time-consuming process.

During the ride I also discovered another issue with phone GPS — it devours battery life. Even with two spare battery packs, I managed to drain all my power each day. If you're using a phone for GPS, ensure you have plenty of spare battery packs or, even better, a phone charging dock on the bike.

The weather forecast for the weekend said blue skies and a balmy temperature. Warm weather gear it was then, along with my pull-over wets just in case. Arriving at the Victory store in Melbourne's CBD, I gazed in awe at the Victory Hammer S I'd be riding for the weekend — the sports version of the 8-ball I was interested in buying. Strapping my camera to the rear seat, with a single backpack carrying



**"The warm air soon cooled me as we cruised down the coast of Port Phillip. It wasn't long before Mother Nature decided to teach me my next lesson"**

my gear, I mounted this 320kg behemoth and took off for Mount Martha. My brother straddled an all-black Victory Judge.

With my jacket lined with the equivalent of flyscreen, the warm air soon cooled me as we cruised down the coast of Port Phillip. It wasn't long before Mother Nature decided to teach me my next lesson.

### **RULE 3: HOPE FOR THE BEST WEATHER AND PACK FOR THE WORST**

On future trips I'll bring gear that is good for dry or wet, cold or warm weather. I'd foolishly only packed warm gear, so when the temperature plummeted, I did my best impersonation of a vibrator, buzzing in my seat as my core body temperature dropped.

Arriving in Mount Martha, I managed to borrow a long-sleeve jumper for the next day. Heading out at 8am the next morning on the beginning of the ride proper, the weather was even colder and my amazing adventure was becoming a gloomy descent into hypothermia. By the time we made it to the excellent Inline 4 Cafe in Mirboo North, I had to top up my inner thermostat with a huge jug of coffee. This gave me time to meet the folks behind this welcoming biker's cafe, where my Swedish hosts gushed over our beautiful bikes. I made a mental note to return to their Blessing of the Bikes ceremony this October.

The summer gloves were letting the cold air straight through, turning my fingers into icicles. Donning my MacGyver hat, I grabbed some cotton gloves from the local hardware store to go under my bike gloves. As we hit the road, I immediately warmed up; finally, I was beating the cold and this trip was looking up.

Leaving Mirboo North we hit the Princes Highway, and our 1731cc V-twin engines devoured the long straights. With a range of just 200km on a full tank, not to mention having bladders only slightly larger than a pea, our rest stops were more frequent than anticipated. My need to jam a ciggie into each of these didn't help our pace either, so we only reached Lakes Entrance by 2.30pm, just 315km into the day's 600km journey.

Pressing on another 60km to Orbost, I realised there was no way we'd make it to Cooma by nightfall, and didn't relish the idea of playing kangaroo lottery at sunset. This road was the first to feature a few twisties, and I struggled to wrench the Hammer's gargantuan 250mm tyre through the corners. By some unholly coincidence, Orbost was host to a biker's rally that weekend so every hotel in the ►





## THE PERFECT TEST RIDE

The impetus for this weekender was Victory's Weekend Escape program. If you're serious about buying a Victory, they'll lend you a demo version of the bike for a full weekend and throw in an overnight hotel pass worth up to \$200.

As my demo weekend fell on the Labour Day long weekend, the gents at Victory were kind enough to lend me the bike for five days. Needless to say, they were a little surprised that we covered 1600km on our journey, when most demos tend to clock up 500km or less. I spoke to Daryl Storrie, the sales manager at Victory's Melbourne store, about the Weekend Escape program.

"If a person is interested in the Weekend Escape, they should visit our showroom and identify a bike, or bikes, that they're interested in testing. It could be an Indian or a Victory. The take up is really good. We find that people who aren't in the market for a bike right now generally won't accept the offer."

"They can take anything in the range, provided we have a demo available. We tend to have a demo of every model and our booking system ensures that bike is available at the requested time. We have a \$2000 excess system so if any damage happens, that payment is taken. If there is anything left over after repairs, we return the remainder."

"I'm a 30-year veteran of the industry and historically a demo ride used to be a maximum of an hour, and we'd get antsy if they didn't return it in an hour. This program really gives people the opportunity to get a feel for the bikes. The overnight helps them — they have that first impression, then the second and third impression. It really allows people's feelings to evolve about the bike."



▲ V-twins are allowed and made very welcome!



▲ The race number did

**"With a range of just 200km on a full tank, not to mention having bladders only slightly larger than a pea, our rest stops were more frequent than anticipated"**

joint was fully booked. It was back to Lake's Entrance after learning yet another lesson about planning a multi-day trip.

#### **RULE 4: BE REALISTIC ABOUT A DAY'S RIDE**

I'd learnt that planning to do an eight-hour stretch in a day isn't feasible if you like to stop regularly. We were stopping every 90 minutes or so, which meant we could comfortably do six hours of solid riding in a day. Knowing this, and with the next day's hotel booking in Albury, I plotted a direct route from Lakes Entrance. Little did I know the one road that could take us straight there was closed for a cycling competition!

Thankfully I remembered rule number one, so I posted the new route on my Facebook page to get local advice and a couple of avid cyclists pointed out the impossibility of the new route. With this in mind, day two's ride was then replotted, leaving from Lakes Entrance up to Cooma in NSW, then cutting back over the Alps to Albury. Gulp. Another whopping eight-hour ride, but there was no other way to make it to Albury. After spending far too long at the Central Hotel enjoying the cover band over drinks, we retired for the night.

Rising early the next morning, it seemed we were heading in the exact same north-east

direction as the rain clouds overhead. They didn't open up on us, but the temperature remained low and the grey skies weren't exactly scenic. Taking a left off the Princes Highway at Cann River, we headed for Bombala in NSW on the Monaro Highway.

The moment we hit the NSW border the skies cleared; it was uncanny. The air warmed as blue skies stretched before us and we blazed up this beautiful stretch of road that seemed purpose-built for cruisers. I couldn't wipe the grin from beneath my helmet; with warmer temps and clear skies, this was the cruise I had been so excited about.

Topping up in Bombala, we mentioned our trip to the attendant, who pointed out a shortcut that would take us direct to Jindabyne, 150km off our ride. It was via the Snowy River Way, possibly the greatest 100km of road ever built for cruisers. With long sweeping turns and plenty of elevation changes, this two-lane road stretches through wide open farmland, backed by massive wind turbines.

It was here that the Hammer and I finally clicked, with the realisation that conscious counter-steering was necessary to tame this mighty beast. What followed was a one-hour rollercoaster ride at high speed, and as we crested the hill that leads into Jindabyne, our mouths were agape at the beautiful blue lake ►



nothing to inspire a race pace this weekend



↑ One of the perfectly sealed backroads. No traffic on this run!



▲ You'd be happy if you scored a new bike for the weekend too



before us. It was one of those moments that I'll never forget, and for which we all ride.

After topping the tanks again at Jindabyne, it was time for the scary part of our journey — navigating the spaghetti-like ribbon of asphalt that is the Alpine Way. In hindsight, it wasn't the smartest way to go.

### RULE 5: PICK THE RIGHT RIDE FOR THE BIKE

My original route saw our cruisers having to handle dirt roads, and now I was asking them to navigate one of Australia's twistiest sections of road. While the Judge handled the switchbacks with ease, the Hammer struggled to stay inside its lane. I now know that the bike is perfectly capable of turns like this, but I simply wasn't experienced enough with its handling to be able to force it around.

Knowing what your bike is built for goes a long way in planning the right ride. Even though I'm now confident hauling the Hammer

around on tight roads, I know that it's better suited to long sweeping turns and straights.

Despite the challenge, it was hard not to be impressed by this stunning stretch of road. One memorable run saw cliffs rising high on both sides of the road, echoing the impressive roar of the Hammer's Stage 1 exhaust like some primal dinosaur. At least with a bike this loud, the wildlife would be sure to run in the opposite direction.

As we left the Alps behind, our cruisers slotted into the long turns of the Murray Valley Highway, another road that seemed crafted just for cruising. Pulling into Albury at 5.30pm, we'd covered a total distance of 600km in one day and it had been one of the greatest days of my life. Finding the local hotspot, we settled in to chat with the locals, basking in the warm afterglow of a satisfying day's ride.

The final day saw us heading back to Melbourne, looping south from Albury to Myrtleford then cutting back into the

mountains on the Mansfield-Whitfield Road. Again the road zigged and zagged to make it up the higher peaks, testing my ability to tame that huge rear tyre. By now I was doing fine, with the pegs occasionally kissing the pavement on the harder turns.

Pulling into Mansfield for lunch, we passed several bikers who'd been booked by the enthusiastic local bike coppers. With our butts well and truly numb, we decided to head straight back into Melbourne, pulling into the CBD at 4pm.

Over the course of the three days we'd travelled a total of 1600kays, 300 more than the plotted journey thanks to diversions, plus toilet and tank fill stops. I'd learnt a lot on this trip, not least that I adored the Hammer. I'm happy to say that a week later I picked up my brand-new Hammer 8-ball, proving that the company's motto of "Ride a Victory and you'll buy a Victory" isn't far from the truth. **ARR**



▲ You've got to watch the slippery sides of the road!



▲ Too many photo stops slows down progress, but it's worth it



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OLYMPIC HIGHWAY DETOURS

# OLYMPIC



# BYWAYS



## Staying off the beaten path turns pain into pleasure

STORY AND PHOTOS: MICK MATHESON

**D**etours are always worth it. It's just a matter of making them happen — choosing to turn off and go the other way instead of plodding along with everyone else. Sometimes it'll be a spur-of-the-moment decision to hook left or right at the crossroads, but more often it's less a choice than a necessity. Need drove me to try the new routes that led to this story coming together. I needed a change from the Olympic Highway as I faced another ride to Melbourne. That's how I discovered a treasure chest of

back roads between Bathurst and Albury as I headed south through NSW.

I'd seen what there was to see on the Olympic Highway so delved into the detailed maps to see what options there were without adding too many kilometres to the trip. The network of roads that ran parallel to the highway, or criss-crossed it at irregular intervals, promised a smorgasbord of riding flavours. It'd be the last long run on last year's long-term Ducati Multistrada, the perfect bike for the menu of highway, byways, back roads and dirt roads.

As I plotted the route I realised I couldn't do all the promising ones in one go, but this was a return trip. I'd be able to try just about all the options.

The ride effectively started in Bathurst on the Mid-Western Highway to Cowra. That's about 100km and reasonably interesting, and even though there are some good detours you can take a bit further south, I opted to cruise the main route for this stretch. On another day I might have ridden via the tiny towns of Barry and Neville — named after brothers, I'm told — and back to the highway ►

■ Kicking up dust on Waterfall Road out the back of Koorawatha



at Mandurama. There's another zig you can zag through Woodstock, too, just for a break from the highway.

Joining the Olympic Highway in Cowra, I stuck with it for about 40km until I found the sign I was looking for: the scenic route to Young. I turned right off the highway and went a couple of hundred metres to a railway crossing that hasn't been used in years. It has been abandoned so long the embankment has disappeared from beneath the rusty rails, which hang drunkenly over the gap. All the same, the sign still orders you to give way and look for trains. If you saw one coming, you'd run a mile to avoid the wreck that was about to happen!

A couple of gaping holes in the tarmac at the crossing indicated the road gets little more attention than the rails. As you cross, keep to the left to avoid losing your front wheel into them, assuming they've not yet been fixed.

The narrow road is lined with gums and soon turns to well-made but slightly slippery gravel before climbing a long hill. As the tar ended, I flicked the Ducati into Enduro mode, for which I'd programmed minimum traction control, and I let the delicious power wind up the rear wheel into long power slides through the sweeping bends. After the hour-and-a-half of scenic but not thrilling progress since Bathurst, it felt great to cut loose a little and let the bike do what it does so well. But I shut

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**"It has been abandoned so long the embankment has disappeared from beneath the rusty rails, which hang drunkenly over the gap"**

■ Sunset lights the rails golden where the Olympic Highway runs beside the tracks

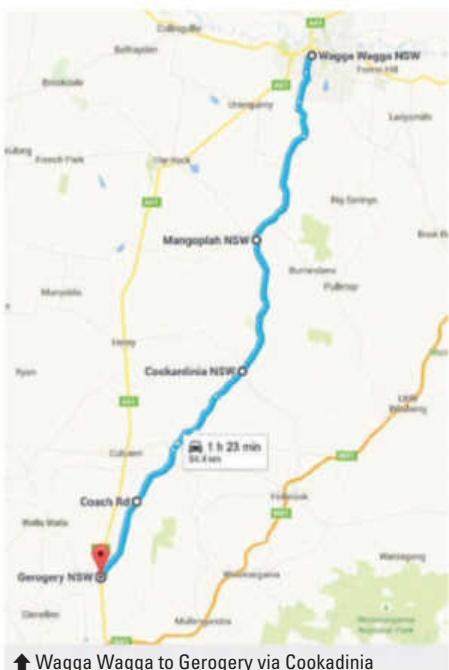




↑ Cowra to Mandurama via Belubula Way



↑ The alternative route between Junee and Cootamundra



↑ Wagga Wagga to Gerogery via Cookardinia



↑ Scenic Road on the north side of Young



it down again as soon as I crested the hill.

Beautiful views suddenly stretched out east and west off the small range. I couldn't resist stopping to soak it in. I could see the highway from here, a thin line down in the long valley where there's not much to see, and I celebrated my good choice of routes by sitting on the hill top in the warm sun for 10 minutes, just looking.

I was at a junction; I'd come from the east and would head south along a dirt road that dived away and out of sight from here. The map hinted there was no point going west, but the road north joined others that would be worth trying on the way home. As it was, I did go that way a few days later on my return, but the road became a track within 100 metres and ended on the next hill at a locked gate. Bugger.

Now I fired up the bike again and pointed it south, running the ridgeline that looked over the highway. I missed a right turn that wasn't prominently marked but nailed the brakes, turned around and got back onto the aptly named Scenic Road. Where the road swings right before dropping off the hills to Monteagle, there's a lookout with toilets. Before Monteagle, the road turns to tar again and follows a fast, sweeping path on to Young. Young is in one of Australia's major cherry-growing districts, so if you're there in spring you should grab a few, or maybe a bottle of cherry wine, which is surprisingly much like regular grape wine.

If you try to detour on the southern side of the Olympic Highway from here you end up being pushed towards the Hume, a fate I couldn't stomach this day. I rode the Olympic Highway as far as Wallendbeen then took a short deviation out on Cullinga Road and into the back of Cootamundra — another worthwhile one just for the sake of it. I'd left late today and by now was running out of light so bee-lined to Junee to find a room. ►

## OLYMPIC HIGHWAY DETOURS

This old railway town looks on the edge of going down or picking up, depending on how the local economy hangs in there. The centre of town has grand old buildings and is dominated by a huge rail crossing, but there's not much happening there. I got a room in the big old Commercial Hotel, which was a nice place for a drink and a feed. The place is past its prime and the rooms a little dilapidated, but the fee is cheap and fair so I was quite content. One day this could be a magnificent hotel again but it'll take a lot of money.

Harefield Road leaves Junee and parallels the highway on its eastern side until they both reach Wagga Wagga. It's a long and pretty road with plenty of local commuters on it in the morning, so whether it was a better bet than the highway is doubtful. Six of one, half a dozen of the other. I had no idea just how big a city Wagga is until I came in on this side road and had to navigate my way through the suburbs until I popped out on Mangoplah Road and followed it down to Cookardinia. There I did a dogleg to head to Morven instead of being forced onto the Hume at Holbrook. The Hume was closing in but I was determined to avoid it as long as possible.

Coach Road took me south from Morven. Now I had some gravel to ride again, a nice change, but it was mostly fast and straight so not much different to tar. The road ended at Gerogery, back on the Olympic Highway, and from there it was only a few minutes to the Hume and then Albury. That's when I turned off my humanity and endured the Hume to Melbourne, longing for the return trip and part two of the Olympic byways.

The weather threatened to storm on me as I came back through Gerogery late on the Sunday after a weekend in Melbourne. The little shop there was shut and I cursed myself for failing to fuel up in Albury, because now



■ It's not what it seems: The dealer has a new showroom on Culcairn's main street

**"That's when I turned off my humanity and endured the Hume to Melbourne, longing for the return trip and part two of the Olympic byways"**

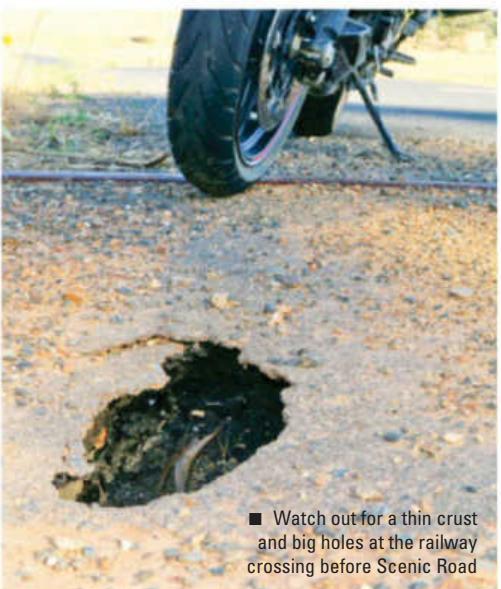
Culcairn would be as far as I'd get that day; I hoped there was a bed available. I was almost there as the sun touched the horizon and a black storm blocked my path ahead. The sky was as black-blue as the tarmac and the paddocks glowing like gold between plots of khaki gums lining the road. It was stunningly pretty and, by some miracle, the storm stepped aside and only the spray off the road dampened my riding gear. I didn't mind the

dampness because it was 30°C this evening, but I regretted catching up with a truck full of reeking cattle that left their stink hanging thickly in the still air.

The Culcairn Hotel is a truly great country pub in big old-fashioned style. It's an ornate two-storey building that's in generally good nick and still features leadlight windows out the back. The wooden bar is impressive. They had a room so I settled in for a quiet night.

■ The view from Touts Lookout looks down to where the main road goes





■ Watch out for a thin crust and big holes at the railway crossing before Scenic Road



■ Silos wait for the next bumper harvest, but dry times don't bode well



■ Junee retains the feel of a grand old country town

A street runs north from the pub's grand frontage and I rode out that way in the morning, on the other side of the railway track from the highway. It went from tar to dirt and back a few times, but was devoid of traffic and much more fun. It took me to Henty, where I got back on the highway all the way to Wagga Wagga. On the north side of town I missed a turnoff that would have taken me to Downside and some little roads to Junee, but I didn't turn back. Just after Junee I turned left onto Marinna Road and the start of a series of really enjoyable roads that once again brought out the best in the Multistrada. In fact, of all the detours I took on this trip, this one's the pick of them. Marinna Road ran straight for a few kays, with lots of ups and downs, then I turned right onto Old Sydney Road, left onto Stanyer/Marinna Road (depends upon which map you're looking at), right onto Junee Reef Road, left onto Retreat Road and right onto Dirlnaseer Road. It had it all — some great sweeping corners, a few rough bits, narrow strips through the trees, some perfectly

### TAKING YOUR TIME

The surprising thing about taking all these detours along the Olympic Highway was that they only added about an hour each way to my total riding time. This included stopping to check my navigation at times as well as taking a few photos.

The extra distance of alternative routes is usually not great. The reduced traffic, roadworks and town speed limits often allow faster average speeds.

The tricks to maintaining a decent pace include having the route planned and marked in your GPS so you never have to worry about it on the way; ensuring you've got fuel stops where you need them along the way; and not stopping too often to take photos ... unless, of course, the whole point is to not be controlled by the clock.

## OLYMPIC HIGHWAY DETOURS

■ Not much risk of getting hit by a train here, unless it's derailing!



**"It had it all — some great sweeping corners, a few rough bits, narrow strips through the trees, some perfectly smooth tarmac and more. Eventually the roads took me into Cootamundra"**

■ The excellent Multistrada is an ideal bike for these varied roads



smooth tarmac and more. Eventually the roads took me into Cootamundra.

From there I found another fast gravel road — Berthing Road led to Burley Griffin Way, where a dogleg intersection put me onto North Berthing Road for more of the same until I reach Boorowa Street, turned right and rode into Young. I couldn't resist doing Scenic Road again to enjoy the great views. That took me back to the Olympic Highway but only as far as Koorawatha, where, after going under the railway bridge, I rode straight ahead rather than turn right with the highway. A moment later, after crossing a bridge, I turned right onto the unsealed Waterfall Road, negotiated a way around the two locals who'd stopped their cars in the middle of the thoroughfare to have a yarn, and blasted up another nice bit of gravel. It ran straight for a while before a series of beat sweepers, and finally returned to the highway just short of Cowra.

Now I tried Binni Creek Road and then Belubula Way to Mandurama, yet another alternative that proved far better than the highway, however my options were running out as I approached Bathurst. There wasn't far to go, so I hit the highway and cruised the rest of the way.

For a change, this had been a memorable and fun ride between Bathurst and the border. Next time I'll have to explore more of what's available on the Victorian leg, because there's no arguing with the fact that the byways are a hell of a lot more interesting than the highways. **ARR**

*For online maps, see "Byways of the Olympic Highway" on [www.roadrider.com.au](http://www.roadrider.com.au).*



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# Gateway PARA



# way to **DISE**

A wide-angle photograph of a tropical beach. The foreground is a sandy beach with some dark, weathered rocks and green leafy plants in the lower left corner. The middle ground shows the ocean with small, white-capped waves breaking near the shore. The background is a clear, pale blue sky.

At the southern gateway to the Great Barrier Reef is the hidden gem of Maryborough



▲ Maryborough Town Hall

#### STORY AND PHOTOS: MARK HINCHLIFFE

**W**hen you think of going for a road trip, Maryborough in south-east Queensland isn't your first choice. It's not even your second or third choice. In fact, there are no bike routes in the whole Fraser Coast region listed in most Australian motorcycle atlases.

So it came as somewhat of a surprise a couple of years ago that the annual Ulysses knees-up was at Maryborough and Hervey Bay. One motorcycle journo who attended a bike launch in the region commented on Facebook: "Good to be home after a ride in what must be Australia's worst motorcycling area up Hervey Bay way. 450km of straight, heavily-trafficked roads and roadwork! My butt is killing me!"

Despite all the exclamation marks, the Fraser Coast still has its attractions for bikers, stunning scenery and a few interesting roads. It's also a great stop-off location for those southerners chasing the winter sun north.

The main lesson is to stay off the Bruce Highway, especially between Gympie and Bundaberg. Much of this area is single lane, 90km/h, double-white lined and plagued by lollipop people at roadworks. The "highway" is in such bad repair and so outdated that it claims about 40 lives a year. At the same time,

it represents only 7.5 per cent of the national highway network and accounts for 17 per cent of fatalities. And in many places, there are roadworks to slow you down even further.

Staying clear of the Bruce can be difficult because most roads to the east are dead ends to the coast. That means you have to go inland, up and over the Great Dividing Range. There

are some exceptional roads through places such as Kilkivan, Biggenden and Brooweenah. But there's no escaping that final boring stretch into Maryborough.

It isn't all bad, though; there is a pleasant aroma of molasses on the heavy humid air as you ride past the canefields. You can also take a short detour into the historic Theebine or



▲ Mary River Parklands

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Tiaro pubs for a solid steak sanger lunch. If you don't mind some dirt, there are some great adventure rides through Wongi Forest and around Paradise Dam to the west.

Rolling into the historic town of Maryborough it's evident that there is a healthy bike culture here. There are many bikes on the road — even when the Ulysses rally isn't in town — and bike shops. In fact, their strong bike culture stretches back 100 years.

To find out about those biking origins, park in the Lennox St car park behind the council building and go for a free walking tour around the CBD. They leave at 9am from Tuesday to Sunday and take a couple of hours, yet only cover a few CBD blocks. You'll hear fascinating stories from when it was the second-largest immigration centre in Australia. Maryborough processed gold workers for the Gympie gold rush and kanaka labourers for the cane fields.

One story I enjoyed was about the last



▲ Beautiful Lake Mackenzie on Fraser Island is just around the corner

## **"Rolling into the historic town of Maryborough, it's evident that there is a healthy bike culture here"**

case heard in the old court house involving two men on attempted murder charges. They were sentenced to hang and the execution, held behind the court, was well attended by townsfolk, according to our guide.

Maryborough is a working-class town and the CBD used to have 25 pubs. At 4pm the whistle would blow at the railway engineering yards and 500 workers would cycle down the main street to get in as much drinking as they could before the pubs shut at 5pm. At one stage the city had 9000 bikes and a population of 20,000.

Later, workers graduated to motorcycles after local Bill Tarrant brought the first bike to town — a three-wheeler where two passengers sat in front of the rider. He set up a motorbike dealership and later sold cars. It is now the oldest Ford dealership in the one location.

Post-war, local bikers would assemble at the town hall on Friday and Saturday nights to do what bikers do — wheelies, burnouts and riding up and down the town hall steps. The cops across the road would watch the fun until they'd had enough, then close it down.

Because it is a working-class town and does not have a thriving tourist industry, accommodation is cheap in Maryborough. Much cheaper than at the tourist-oriented Hervey Bay, just 30 minutes down the road.

There are many hotels and motels, or you ▶



▲ Fraser Island south from Indian Head

**WHERE TO STAY**

Mango Hill B&B and Hill of Promise Winery  
Phone: 1800 816 020  
Email: mangohillcottagebb@bigpond.com  
Web: www.hillofpromise.com; www.mangohillcottages.com



## MARYBOROUGH

could try a bed and breakfast such as Eco Queenslander, a sustainable tourism home stay. The quaint old-style house has two bedrooms and can sleep up to six, with a lock-up garage underneath that will secure up to a dozen bikes.

It started in 2009 and has won several eco-tourism awards as it uses solar electricity, rainwater tanks, energy-efficient lighting and appliances, and even biodegradable toilet paper. French owners Cecile and Stephen Espigole can organise tours for you to Fraser Island, the Great Barrier Reef, whale watching and even teach you some French.

From here you can walk into town and catch a show at the Brologa Theatre, dine at one of the CBD pubs or restaurants, or catch Music in the Courtyard at Janet's Art Space, where local musicians entertain over weekend lunches. Maryborough's CBD is also worth a wander for its many restored historic buildings and museums, such as the Military and Colonial Museum.

The region hosts a lot of festivals and special events like the Relish Food and Wine Festival, PubFest, Seafood Festival at nearby Hervey Bay and Picnic Races at Torbanlea. Love Mary Day celebrates the fact that the author of Mary

### TOURIST INFO

Fraser Coast Tourism, 229 Maryborough Road, Hervey Bay  
Phone: (07) 4191 2600. Fax: (07) 4191 2699.  
Mob: 0427 587 048  
Web: [www.visitfrasercoast.com;](http://www.visitfrasercoast.com;)  
[tourismfrasercoast.com.au](http://tourismfrasercoast.com.au)



▲ Terry Byrne's Hill of Promise lives up to expectations



▲ Janet's Art Space is a great place to kick back



▲ Ulysses welcome here!

Poppins, PL Travers, was born here.

The ride down to Hervey Bay is uneventful, with straight roads and little rise and fall. It's worth going down for a promenade on your cruiser along the 18km esplanade, taking in the views of Fraser Island. You can stop off and dine at the many restaurants or coffee shops and wander along the 800m Urangan Pier.

If you're into nature, visit the Fraser Coast Discovery Sphere in the Fraser Coast Cultural Centre to view the aquatic life. You can cruise the calm waters of Hervey Bay to experience humpback whales in late winter and spring, or take a trip over to Fraser, the world's largest sand island. The Fraser Coast's diverse natural attractions are recognised in the same class as the Galapagos Islands and Central Amazon.

From Hervey Bay, head north along the coast to the sleepy little seaside towns of Toogam and



↑ You can't ride past Theebine Pub

## "Little seaside towns of Toogam and Burrum Heads are where the pace of life is only interrupted by the tug on the end of a fishing line"

Burrum Heads, where the pace of life is only interrupted by the tug on the end of a fishing line. From there it is back onto the Bruce for a short trip up to Childers, where you must try the local Mammino ice-cream.

You can also check out the local wildlife park, Snakes Downunder, to see crocodiles, lizards, monitors, dragons, snakes, turtles, frogs, kangaroos and more. It is also worthwhile visiting the sobering Childers Backpackers Memorial in the Palace Building, where 15 backpackers died in a fire in 2000. Miraculously 70 escaped the timber hostel, which had no smoke detectors or fire alarms.

We stayed just out of town at the Mango Hill B&B and Hill of Promise Winery. It has two quaint little cottages where you can shake off the road dust and relax while sampling the wines made by Terry and Mary Byrne.

Terry's grandparents came from Sicily and he started making pineapple wine at the age of 10. He seriously started making wine in 2000, but in recent years the business has been set back by a series of floods and massive highway roadworks. Terry says they still get a lot of bikers passing through on their way north. It's a great place to stop and recharge the batteries, but it's 4.5km from town so Mary can prepare a wholesome home-cooked meal to save you riding to dinner.

That should allow you to sample their award-winning organic wines which have no chemicals, so you won't wake up with a headache in the morning when you continue on your northern adventure. **ARR**





# My Gen



# eneration

In the third instalment of our Origins series, we uncover how the Cafe Racer cemented its place in motorcycle history books

## ORIGINS

■ The 2007 Ace Cafe reunion



### STORY: STEVIE JORDAN

**B**efore The Beatles had put British music on the map, there was another sound that was helping define youth culture in the late 1950s.

This was a time when televisions were monochrome, the miniskirt was yet to hit the high street and landing on the moon was still a fantasy. It was also a time when British motorcycles were the ultimate on two wheels and the country was waking up to a unique Brit bike engine hum.

The era was to be defined by young men across Britain getting their thrills from reaching the fabled 100mph benchmark. Helping create the legend of the cafe racer, they had a love affair with speed and passion for the open road. The Ton Up Boys had arrived.

This new and unique culture was like nothing before. To understand its origins, we have to go back to the 1940s when Britain was coming off the hump of WWII. Britain needed to pick up the pieces of its shattered society so to help



■ A ratty Triton.  
Wouldn't see that today!

■ Moto Guzzi's modern-day retro classic



mobilise its people and jump-start the country back to life, many ex-army motorbikes were hitting the second-hand market for road use.

For the first time since bikes started to replace the horse and cart, two-wheeled transport was again adopted by civilians in their thousands. Motorcycles were helping industrialise a stagnant post-war era and were becoming part of everyday life.

By the 1950s, the young boys who had fantasised over the speed record-breaking

poster pin-up Black Shadow (released in 1948) were growing up. Britain had climbed out of its post-war recession and the country was in evolution. More and more people could afford to buy cars at the time. Motorcycles were typically the transport of choice for a generation of young men who weren't in danger of conscription to the military. But these were teenagers looking for excitement in the wake of their fathers' heroic WWII exploits.

As a result, a distinct youth culture was

emerging — with motorcycles at the heart of it. Centred on rebellion and a carefree attitude, Britain's teenagers moulded their new philosophies around highway "trucker" cafes. These were only a freshly imported idea from trendy European and American influences at the time.

Rock 'n' roll was fast becoming the soundtrack of the time as more and more hangouts started sprouting up. These places would cater for the young rockers who were racing from cafe to cafe in every British city. Fuelling the capital's youth, London's roadside stop, the Ace Cafe, was soon among the most prominent.

Popular for its quick eats, cheap coffee and jiving jukebox, the Ace was most notorious for the North Circular. This was a high-speed road that the Ton Up Boys would use as a drag strip to ride past the cafe at full throttle. The bikers would gather in their hundreds and race against the clock — and each other — to neighbouring hotspots such as the Busy Bee cafe or Chelsea Bridge tea stall.

Tony Wilson was 19 when the ton up culture was rising to prominence in his native London. Living within 2km of the Busy Bee, Wilson and his self-labelled gang of rocker pals merged seamlessly into this exciting new two-wheeled world.

"Coming of age during the ton up years ►



■ Guzzi's V7 Sport of 1972 inspired the modern-day V7 range



■ Norton's new Commando looks very much the '60s cafe racer

## "Mod culture was spreading as fast as the Ton Up Boys had done just a few years before"

was an experience I wouldn't change for the world," Wilson states in the thickest of cockney accents. "In those days, our lives centred around care free fun. All we were interested in was girls and bikes — but not necessarily always in that order.

"While chasing chicks was a hoot, our real

kicks came from riding bikes. I don't think we were aware at the time that we were part of something that would be remembered as a legacy — it was just what we did after work. We'd meet up at the 'Bee, race to the roundabout and back again — always flat out. On weekends we'd head to the Ace. Any bike

that couldn't do the ton could f\*\*k off."

The press labelled the likes of Wilson and his thrill-seeking mates as hooligans and a social nuisance — typecast that would forever taint the motorcycle world. Despite this and an immeasurable amount of crash casualties, a whole generation of young riders could not be deterred.

"People were killed all the time," Wilson explains. "I remember a group of four riders died in one collision. A week later a man and his wife came off — they had a Royal Enfield with a sidecar and were trying to keep up with a crew round the bends. She lived, he didn't."

"We all had spills, though some of us were lucky — it was just part of it. I came off three times in a week once ... I remember being more worried about repairing the bike than I was about the broken arm I suffered in the last crash."

By the 1960s, British motorcycles had entered their most infamous era. The rockers had a notorious status of young, low-life thugs who travelled everywhere at 100mph — a stereotype based on the racers' adoption of speed as an ideology. For them, the idea that motorcycles were simply an everyday mode of transport had died with their grandfathers. Now motorbikes were a means to platform their identity in a closed social scene which had a unique culture.

This culture was, in many ways, defined by the leather jacket. Influenced by '50s American culture, the bikers' leather jackets were more than just a fashion accessory. They would go on to be the symbol of the rebels with its origins ►



■ If it's in colour, it's not likely original!

■ Marlon Brando from the US film, 'The Wild One' had the look right





■ Rockers on their Triumph saying hello to some Mods on their Lambretta

■ BMW's R nineT has its cafe racer roots



that can be found in German military uniforms.

Brandishing patch-clad jackets with proud intent, Britain's motorcycling youth were becoming distanced from conventional society. The cafe racers were stanchly committed to the ton and a full throttle lifestyle, regardless of the consequences.

"We didn't hate tweed-wearing society, we just thought those people were boring," Wilson says with a glint in his eye. "Our lifestyle was loathed by the mainstream; for us, that was the approval we needed."

In a similar way to many of today's riders, the rockers back then considered bikes to be the last frontier of freedom. The motorcycles they centred their lifestyle on were the throbbing heart of cafe racer culture and the essence of the thrills and adrenalin that the Ton Up Boys sought.

Among their single- and twin-cylinder weapons of choice, Norton and later Triumph were the most popular. The bikes all had one thing in common though: they were typically customised in homage to the Isle of Man TT road racers' machines of the time. Unknowingly, the rockers and Ton Up Boys were crafting a style that would become familiar to motorcycle fans across the world: dropped handlebars and rear-set pegs for ultimate aerodynamics and balance — the cafe racer.

**"These were teenagers looking for excitement in the wake of their fathers' heroic Second World War exploits"**

By the end of the decade, with more and more of the rockers maturing into adulthood, the influence of a new generation of teenagers was starting to build. Mod culture was spreading as fast as the Ton Up Boys had done just a few years before. But in their designer suits and pointy loafers, the Mods were everything that the rockers weren't. They hung out in chic bars and clubs that played new-fangled progressive music. Most significantly of all, the Mods rode Italian Lambretta and Piaggio scooters.

Spreading from London, this distinct new culture, with origins that stemmed from a thriving European influence, was a sign of Britain moving forward into a new era. As with any period of change came the dissent. Infamous clashes between Mods and rockers highlighted the opposing philosophies between these youth cultures. Britain's press capitalised on public interest around the issue to vilify all two-wheelers.

As the media spun their stories on bikie violence, Japanese motorcycle manufacturers were sneaking into the British market through the back door. Japanese bikes were reliable, practical, understated, no-frills machines that didn't have a notorious reputation.

"The police started coming down hard on the scene," Wilson recalls. "It got to the point where Brit Bikes were being singled out so riders started losing their licenses. One guy I knew was



■ Mods liked fashion as much as they liked scooters

**Daily Mirror**

Monday, August 3, 1964 No. 18,854

**Battle of Hastings—18 arrested**

# RIOT POLICE FLY TO SEASIDE

**Torpedo boats attack a U.S. warship**

**FLY TO SEASIDE**

**Riot squad" police file quietly into the transport plane at Northolt. A few minutes later they were in the air on their way to the trouble spots.**

↑ The Bank Holiday weekend of May 18 and 19 1964 saw thousands of Mods and Rockers flock to the English beachside towns of Brighton, Margate, Clacton, Southend and Hastings for a good ol' biff.

forced to put a new paint job on his Bonnie and start riding in a disguise, using goggles and a scarf to make sure the cops didn't recognise him. Funnily enough, it didn't work for very long."

Japanese bikes were on the rise and would be here to stay. Soon, the Japanese would go on to lead almost every sector of the motorcycle market. It can be argued that the Brit bikes of the '60s pushed the industry to new realms and inspired, in one way or another, many bikes that would be developed over the decades to come.

If proof is needed to support this claim, the legacy of Brit Bikes speaks for itself. Triumph still produces the Bonneville in different guises. The new-age Bonneville, just like the new Norton Commando, Moto Guzzi V7 range or BMW R nineT, among others, pays homage to the original cafe racers.

"I know it's a cliché, but one song became the soundtrack to our lives — 'My Generation' by The Who," Wilson concludes. "Even though it was an anthem for the Mods, I still can't listen to it without being totally enchanted by the lyrics: People did try to put us down. We didn't care if we died before we got old. We weren't trying to cause a big sensation. It was just our generation ..." **APP**

# Rouining Thunder

Throttle Roll showcases the talent of motorcycle builders with vision and is a motorcycle extravaganza not to be missed







#### STORY AND PHOTOS: TIM MUNRO

**N**ow into its third year, the Throttle Roll custom show is gaining a huge following, with several bike builders building machines for the event. The machines on show were a great inspiration and you could admire the awesome craftsmanship from a bunch of talented engineers.

There was a massive turn out for this year's Throttle Roll event in the Sydney suburb of Enmore. Custom-built and retro-styled bikes have been popular over the decades and look to be making another resurgence.

Breaking the mould of the traditional motorcycle show, this is more of a party and celebration of the culture surrounding the custom scene. Held at the Vic Hotel in Enmore,

the event was well catered for, with live music, good food and plenty of alcohol available. The bikes were displayed around three levels of scaffolding in the car park, where around 50 custom-built bikes were featured.

There was much of the visual interest lined up on the streets around the hotel, on the footpaths, and in the alleyways. A large number of riders rolled up through the day. ▶









**"It is a testament to the organiser's dedication to all things custom that the event is completely free to attend"**

There were many onlookers hanging out on the street watching the stream of bikes parade up and down the road behind the pub.

Proving these bikes are actually made to be ridden, there was an organised ride to start the day. More than 300 machines headed south of Sydney and through the Royal National Park before heading for the city to park up and enjoy the atmosphere at Enmore.

Both the machines and people were varied. Families wandered through the display, mingling with well-groomed fashionable inner-city types as well as grey-bearded bikers. The crowds lingered into the night as the bands picked up the pace and things got more lively.

It is a testament to the organiser's

dedication to all things custom that the event is completely free to attend, a rare bonus these days, and Mark Hawwa has done a good job of arranging industry sponsorship to fund it. One sponsor, Sol Invictus, even gave away a Mercury Cafe Racer built by the Rising Sun Workshop to one lucky young bloke.

It is great to see a unique motorcycle event that caters as much to the culture surrounding the custom scene as it does to the machine. This is a growing area of interest for many motorcyclists and next year's Throttle Roll event will no doubt be bigger and better. Hit their website at [www.throttleroll.com](http://www.throttleroll.com) and like their Facebook page to get updates on events and dates. **ARR**



# TESTING TESTING



## SHOEI NXR

Shoei has quite a select range of helmets. Covering adventure riding to motocross or commuters to racers, they have a helmet for every rider.

The model range consists of nine models to cover all these bases. For road riders, there is the X-Twelve race helmet, GT-Air and TZ-X touring helmets and the flip-face Neotec. The

final helmet in the line-up is the NXR — a sport-touring helmet that replaced the successful XR-1100.

The XR-1100 was a helmet designed with good ventilation, comfortable fit and sporty style. I've worn an XR-1100 for the past few years and its predecessor, the XR-1000 before that. From each model to the next the improvements have been noticeable. As the NXR was the successor to Shoei's lineage of sports-touring lids, I was keen to see if this improvement trend would continue.

Pick up the NXR and you can feel it is lighter. It also feels thinner around the mouth and it is visibly more compact around the back of the helmet.



A change to the airflow in the helmet sees a similarly sized and styled chin and head vent with three-position opening. After three years of use, the vents in my old XR-1100 don't operate as fluidly or precisely as the NXR's. I now know why they supply that little bottle of oil with the helmet ...

The addition of a central vent has given the NXR greater air intake volume. The positioning of the exhaust vents beneath the stabiliser bump at the rear has improved the airflow and quietened the helmet. Both these aspects have been greatly improved. Particularly in hot, slow-speed situations, the XR-1100 was warmer inside. This helmet breathes more efficiently at slow speed and is



↑ The new centre vent makes the helmet much cooler



↑ The exhaust vent is now located under the speed hump



↑ Side-by-side comparison of XR1100 (left) and NXR (right) shows subtle differences that make a significant improvement



↑ New visor mechanism is more precise and easier to change visors



↑ Provision for intercom gear is waiting

definitely quieter too, even though it is still a tight, new fit.

Fit is another aspect that's changed. Helmets can change from brand to brand and initial fit is always an aspect of the Shoei design that I didn't like initially. But the NXR was comfortable straight away.

The liner is plush and holds your head firmly. It has varying densities at different contact points to give the comfortable fit. It wicks away moisture well and I haven't yet had a very hot day to test how well it dries from sopping wet.

There are four different shell sizes: S, M, L and XL. These are different from the helmet sizes. They allow for the optimal shell size for a head, meaning a lighter lid with less padding and weight than an oversized shell.

The stability of the XR-1100 couldn't be questioned. It wasn't a strain to wear on big days. That said, the NXR is equally capable but it is noticeably quieter and lighter on the scales. Weighing in at 1500g compared to the 1700g of the XR-1100 I have, every little last gram of leverage saved on your neck muscles is going to make it easier on the person wearing it.

Additional features of the helmet are provision for glasses to run through the helmet and also a recess around the ear, and more room in front of the mouth to take an intercom easily.

Inside the helmet there is an obvious difference to the field of view. There's 5mm more space vertically across the lower part of the visor and it opens up a lot more of the view lower in the field of vision. This is a change that allows you to keep your head more upright to see the road nearest you or behind on a head check. I wouldn't have noticed how big a change this is if I couldn't have worn the XR-1100 back to back!

After three years, the XR-1100's visor has got a bit soft in its opening and closing. It floats over the grooves to hold it in place and I can't keep it at anything but full open or shut as the wind blows it easily. The visor base plate has had a redesign and a five-step rotating dial handles visor position. There's a lot of options around your eye line to keep the visor open and not affect your line of sight.

The NXR has felt lighter, quieter, smaller and better ventilated from day one. The XR-1100 was good, but this helmet is better in every respect.

— MATT SHIELDS

## NXR TRANSITIONS VISOR

Partnerships can be good — like bourbon and coke — and they can be bad — like meat pies in the crust of your pizza.

Shoei's partnership with Transitions is one that is good. Transitions is a company that brought photochromatic glasses to the public in 1991. They have worked on helmet visors since 2010 and the NXR is the latest helmet to get the technology. I haven't experienced Transition lenses before, but have heard people swear by them. I do too after my time with this visor so far.

When it was dark it went clear and when it was bright it went dark. The change wasn't noticeable and I didn't want it any lighter. I did want darker on my westerly afternoon commute in Sydney, but only the darkness an illegal visor brings.

At \$249.95 it is a lot of money for a visor. In the long run you won't be on and off again with clear and tinted visors. That means the hinge mechanism won't flog out as quick, and maybe why my XR-1100 isn't as precise in its action anymore.

You won't have to remember your sunglasses with this visor and fitted with the anti-fog pinlock, you couldn't ask any more. Scratch it or care for it incorrectly and it's a lot of money down the drain. Care for it like you should and it's an investment in safety and convenience you won't be able to live without again.



## DETAILS

**Solid:** \$749.90

**Metallic:** \$779.90

**Graphic:** \$849.90

**Replica:** \$879.90

**Sizes:** XS-XXL

**Visit:** [mcleodaccessories.com.au](http://mcleodaccessories.com.au)

## OXFORD MONDIAL 1.0

Pick it up and it feels like a summer jacket. A summer jacket with a waterproof liner, removable puffa jacket, rain hood, armour and pseudo-suede collar. Warm days are taken care of simply. Remove two liners, unzip the mesh vents and you have a cool jacket to ride in.

When it's cold outside, the Mondial is warm inside. Designed by English company Oxford, they should know a thing about riding in the cold. I've been through some cold winter mornings this year and it's not quite a match for my winter riding gear in the cold and wet. On cold mornings and in anything but prolonged rain, it was warmer and dryer than it deserved to be, considering how cool it was in the heat.

The jacket is made predominantly of polyester and is light, with a pleasant surface texture. This jacket doesn't feel bulky and the fit is more like a summer jacket than a bulky winter one. The adjustable waist, hip and arm straps tighten it up to make it feel a lot smaller.

There are other features, like a pants zip connector, chest and back protector pockets,



as well as an internal mobile phone pocket. I'd never use them, but there are a lot of people who will appreciate these extra features of the jacket.

It's not a jacket for riding in the rain, but it stays relatively dry in showers. If you are caught out in the wet you'd be ok with the Mondial, but you wouldn't plan to be out in the rain wearing it without an outer liner over the top. The type you can fit under a pillion seat should be enough.

As far as being a great all-round jacket, the Mondial does it all. On warm days it is brilliantly breathable and well ventilated. On cold days it is warm enough for anything north of Sydney near the coast. Anything colder or wetter and you best go for dedicated wet weather gear.

It's the kind of jacket you can commute in every day of the week, use on weekends, and back it up with a wet-weather over suit. In essence, it's a great all-round jacket. — MS



### DETAILS

**Sizes:** Small-5XL

**RRP:** \$399.95

**Colour:** Black

**Contact:** [ficeda.com.au](http://ficeda.com.au)



■ Back section unzips to improve airflow



■ Stretch panels and Superfabric overlays add to comfort and safety

## TRIUMPH NAVIGATOR JACKET

Triumph has produced some high-quality gear to go with its motorcycles, and I've always been impressed by the products I've tried. The new Navigator jacket, aimed at adventure-touring riders, is up there with the rest. I've used it on several difficult tours as well as in day-to-day riding and have found plenty of good things to say about it.

For starters, it's tough — made from 500-denier Cordura with Kevlar high-density armour in the shoulders, elbows and back. High-impact areas are protected by Superfabric panels, which are a laminated material incorporating an element of ceramics for a result that's very high in abrasion and cut resistance as well as other strengths.

I haven't put those things to the test, but I can vouch for the excellent water repellence of the outer materials, which are treated with DuPont Teflon. It's so good that even in a torrential downpour I didn't need to rely on the waterproofing of the removable inner liner that's also provided. Unlike many other jackets, this means you can stay dry when you've got the liners out in hot weather. A second liner provides thermal insulation and it's toasty warm in the depths of winter. You don't need many layers underneath to beat the cold.

For the summer, large vents are fitted to

the chest, which are very quick to open and close thanks to a pull cord. However, the waterproof inner pockets block most of their ability to flow air, so they're not as effective as they should be. There are zipped vents in the shoulders and sleeves, and the entire back panel unzips to allow air out, yet this isn't the jacket I'd choose for hot-weather trips.

Apart from that, comfort is excellent. The plush interior and soft edges are good, movement is easy and the cut is right. The adjustable waist straps, stretch panels and side adjustment zips improve it further.

The Navigator has enough pockets, including waterproof ones, to carry lots of little items in a convenient way. Matching gloves and pants are available to complete the ensemble. On its own the jacket is a fine bit of kit as long as you're not frequently using it in hot conditions. Using it as a full suit you'd be all set for plenty of arduous adventures, kept snug and well protected.

— MICK MATHESON

### DETAILS

**Price:** Men's \$595, women's \$495

**Sizes:** Men's S-3XL, Women's XXS-3L

**Colours:** Grey/blue

**Info:** triumphmotorcycles.com.au or your dealer

# WHATZ NEW

## AUSTRALIAN MOTORCYCLE HEADLIGHT PROTECTORS

Fitting a headlight protector can save hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars of the replacement cost on a new headlight. Thankfully Australian Motorcycle Headlight Protectors has just released more models to its ever increasing and vast range of quality protectors to make sure everyone can be covered.

New models just released are for the 2015 BMW F800R, S1000R and R1200R, as well as Yamaha's new MT-09 Tracer. All made from 3mm hi-grade acrylic, these protectors are easy to fit and simple to remove for cleaning.

**Price:** From \$53 plus P&H  
**Visit:** [www.amhp.com.au](http://www.amhp.com.au)



RIDERS LIFE

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### IT'S ABOUT THE RIDER

When you're a motorcycle rider, you are most likely to be involved in an accident. We are focused on protecting you and your family from financial hardship in the event that you come off.

Remember, there are only 2 types of riders: Those who have come off and those who are yet to come off!

[GET STARTED](#) [SEE MORE](#)



ONLINE LIFE INSURANCE QUOTATION

Family Life Insurance and Standard Protection Options

PERSONALISED APPROACH

Insurance solutions as unique as you

COMPLETE FINANCIAL PLANNING SOLUTION

This is a comprehensive service including all aspects of your financial planning

Insurance Renewal Tips

When the insurance renewal for your car, home or other assets is due, it's important to renew by the deadline. Don't risk losing your cover.

Why did I create this site?

I'm the founder of Riders Life and the guy behind the scenes. I've been a motorcycle rider since I was 10 years old and I've always loved the sport. I wanted to create a website that would help other motorcycle riders like myself to stay safe and enjoy their hobby.

ENSURE NOW

RIDERS LIFE

INSURANCE QUOTATION

PERSONALISED APPROACH

COMPLETE FINANCIAL PLANNING SOLUTION

## RIDERS LIFE INSURANCE

The surge in the number of new riders or riders returning to two wheels in recent years has prompted Steven Hallam to create a service specifically for those who ride, with the focus on estate planning and life insurance.

Riders Life offers three levels of service: an online insurance solution, personal insurance advice and a comprehensive financial planning solution. Check out the website to see what is on offer in detail.

**Contact:** 0455 968 987

**Visit:** [www.riderslife.com.au](http://www.riderslife.com.au)



### **YAMAHA MT-07 OGGY KIT**

Full 'Pro' protection kits including Oggy Knobbs and Axle Oggys (wheel, fork, swing arm protection) are now available for Yamaha's MT-07.

Oggy Knobbs are Australian-owned and -made, with new CNC machinery producing the MT-07 from billet aluminium while there is also a steel version available.

For the price of a helmet you can ensure you can stop costly and damaging mistakes happening if your bike falls over at a standstill or at speed.

**Price:** \$599

**Contact:** 1800 251 145

**Visit:** [www.kenma.com.au](http://www.kenma.com.au)



### **REDVERZ SOLO EXPEDITION TENT**

For those who have perfected the art of being alone, Redverz Gear introduces the Solo Expedition Motorcycle Tent. A lighter and more compact version than the original motorcycle tent, the Solo is designed to accommodate a single camper while remaining spacious. The tent's 'garage'

has wide headroom, tall enough to stand in and house a fully loaded adventure bike. The two-pole construction makes for fast and easy set-up and the flexible hoop design is rated for three seasons and offers excellent performance in wind and rain.

**Call:** 02 9651 3355

**Visit:** [www.adventuremoto.com.au](http://www.adventuremoto.com.au)

## MOTOGP 15 DAY 1 EDITION

Day 1 Edition of MotoGP 15 is the third chapter in the series of games mirrored on MotoGP. New for 2015, the Day 1 Edition includes a special token to download legendary four-stroke machines from a decade ago as ridden by the

likes of Rossi, Capirossi, Bayliss, Biaggi, Stoner, Gibernau and many more.

The game allows customisation of loads of machine features and you can even go in and style up your motorhome! You can sign a contract for a factory team or choose sponsors in your own private team, with negotiations hinging on your performance

during races — just like the real world!

Other new features include the introduction of legendary two-stroke machines, all the teams, riders and bikes from the 2015 season, and real events from the 2014 season.

**From:** Games retailers Australia-wide

**Visit:** [www.motogpvideogame.com](http://www.motogpvideogame.com).



## HELMET HOOK

Helmet Hook is a clever way of having somewhere for you to place your helmet when you are on the road.

Not designed to be a 100 per cent theft-proof helmet lock, the Helmet Hook was born out of frustration. The inventor simply dropped his helmet one too many times and wanted somewhere safe to put it while on the road.

The Helmet Hook can be mounted on handlebars with bar-end weights or handguards and is compatible with virtually every bike on the market.

Made from ¼-inch ABS plastic, the hook is very strong and includes a hole in the hook to allow a small padlock to be fitted for security and peace of mind.

**Price:** \$18.95

**Visit:** [www.helmethookaustralia.com](http://www.helmethookaustralia.com)



**SUZUKI V-STROM  
1000 K&N  
HI-FLOW FILTER**

KN Engineering has released a new high-flow air filter for the Suzuki V-Strom 1000. The K&N replacement air filter is made with specially woven cotton gauze to ensure more effective breathing than a paper filter. This is something vital to adventure bikes that eat up a lot of miles on tar and dirt. The cotton-pleated media provides a large filtration area offering long service intervals and excellent filtration. The filter slots directly into the OEM airbox without any fitting or cutting, is washable, reusable, pre-oiled and ready for installation.

**Price:** \$99.95

**Visit:** [www.ctaaustralia.com.au](http://www.ctaaustralia.com.au)



**ROAD GLIDE FAT  
APE HANDLEBAR**

Classically shaped, this mini-ape handlebar adds a touch of old school to the modern bagger. Specifically for the Harley-Davidson Road Glide model, the Road Glide Fat Ape 1.25-inch Handlebar features internal wiring and offers 15 inches of rise. Road Glide Fat Ape Handlebar is available in two finishes: chrome and satin black.

**Price:** \$373

**Visit:** [www.harley-davidson.com.au](http://www.harley-davidson.com.au)



# READERS RITE

## WINNER



■ Bravely staying ahead of the support vehicle in Wonderland ...

### NOT ME!

I wish it to be known that the Wayne mentioned in Charley Boorman's African Winter Wonderland is not me. Although had I been there, it probably would have been me in the ditch and relegated to the 450. Then again, those who have ridden with me would know

without being told that I would never have been brave enough to ride with Charley in the first place. He tends to go places where, if I was along, the support vehicle would be a hearse.  
Wayne Talbot  
Kelso, NSW

### WAVING DISCUSSION

A late note for Gregor here re waving. I missed Gregor's column in ARR#110 and was brought back to it by the later letters.

Gregor, I am a waver. It's automatic, though still well meant. I couldn't ride past a bike out on my own without waving — just

**"Over the long grey crest ahead came a single bike headlight and before I could raise my hand, up goes a wave. I responded. It made me smile in my foggy helmet for the next kilometre."**

couldn't do it. To me, other riders aren't just traffic, they're fellow riders.

Last year I was on a lonely, rainy, misty and cold-morning New England Highway run. I had the highway to myself, no one in my mirrors or ahead. Over the long grey crest ahead came a single bike headlight and before I could raise my hand, up goes a wave. I responded. It made me smile in my foggy helmet for the next kilometre.

That's the effect a simple wave has on me. By waving to other riders who don't respond, maybe they reflect on that as we pass, and just maybe they will try it and feel the fellowship effect.

Ian Taylor  
Email

D on't forget to write! We mean it. We love to hear from you and everyone else does too; these pages are among the most popular in the magazine. Preferably, keep letters under 300 words so we can fit more in, though we will allow the odd exception without taking to it with the editorial knife. Yes, we will chop 'em when we have to. Do include your real name and some contact details, just in case we need to clarify something. Please write to [roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au](mailto:roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au) or send mail to *Road Rider*, Unit 5, 6-8 Byfield Street, North Ryde NSW 2113 — **Matho**

## WIN THIS LOOK HOT

Every issue we're giving away this beaut pack of Motul cleaning gear worth \$49.95. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is write to us. We'll pick what we think is the best letter every month and the top blokes at Motul will fire out this pack to whoever wrote it. Simple. Pack includes some of the best washing and detailing products on the market:

- Wash & Wax, a waterless cleaner that leaves a wax coating
- Moto Wash, good for all surfaces
- Scratch Remover, a micro-abrasive cream for painted surfaces
- Helmet & Visor Clean, to keep your lid and your view pristine.

Email [roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au](mailto:roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au) or mail to ARR at 5/6-8 Byfield St, North Ryde NSW 2113. We'll do the rest.

A black and red product box for 'MOTUL MC CARE PACK'. The box features the 'MOTUL' logo and the text 'MC CARE' and 'CARE PACK'. It also includes the text 'A GIFT FROM THE EXPERTS FOR YOUR BIKE' and 'FEATURING WASH & WAX, MOTO WASH, SCRATCH REMOVER AND HELMET & VISOR CLEAN'. Below the box, the word 'MOTUL' is written in large, bold, white letters.

## LONG TIME NO WRITE

Coupla/few things ...

Mr Smith: great memory of a bloke oft heard or read, but never met. To me, he was a bit of a David Attenborough of motorcycles and motorcyclosophy. Way back, it was a highlight of my week to listen to him — with Guy Allen, I think — on 3RRR radio in my pre-Sydney days.

The on-road greeting: acknowledging a fellow traveller of similar bent (and not necessarily lean) is a genuine thing. When I was a kid, we travelled far and wide in assorted Holdens and later a Humber or two. Not all that many people were doing that sort of thing; and it was commonplace to give a wave to someone coming in the opposite direction or parked at the roadside. Brilliant fellow goodwill! I reckon that an index (not middle) finger vertically pointed signals a couple messages: "G'day" and "Bloody-good-on-you, fellow biker, that's one for us".

0-100: in its early days, ARR sometimes published 0-100km/h times for bikes. I like to see this comparative performance yardstick figure, as I do with car reviews. I think that would be the case with many others. Is it not published because it might attract negative attention to the fact that many bikes out-accelerate most cars?

Me thinks that car drivers have a fair

idea that that is the case, albeit a goodly number of them attempt the from-the-lights challenge or sweep past us at speed to show us "they can do it", even in heavily "controlled" suburban zones.

Chris Miller

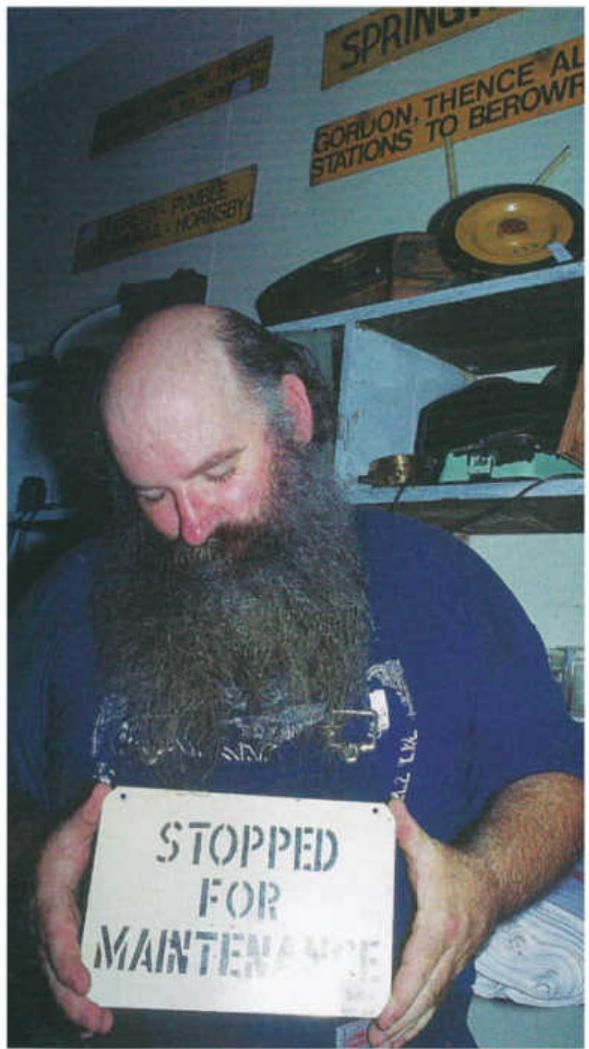
Email

*It has been while, but it's never too long when the comments are worthwhile. Mr Smith is sorely missed and fondly remembered. I can't pass through Quirindi or Tambar Springs without thinking about him.*

*I wouldn't trust any published figures on 0-100 times on motorcycles for all sorts of reasons. No-one I've ever met could do an accurate measurement manually, and very few riders I know are capable of getting a true 0-100 time out of anything but the slowest and gentlest of motorcycles.*

*Now that electronic launch control is being employed on the most advanced bikes (top-end racers and the 2015 BMW S1000RR), it's possible for even the best riders to have a bike on the limit of its acceleration from the instant it starts moving.*

*So unless I knew I had a way to guarantee all the figures we published were correct, I wouldn't want to put figures out there that aren't credible. Others do, I know, but as I said, I wouldn't trust them ... — Matho*



## HEAD TEST

Ever considered doing a helmet comparison? You know, round up a few mates, give them half a dozen different helmets to wear,

then rate them according to comfort, noise, vision, weight, ease of use and that sort of thing. Just about every edition has a review of the latest offering from one or another of

the major helmet makers, but how do they stack up against the competition?

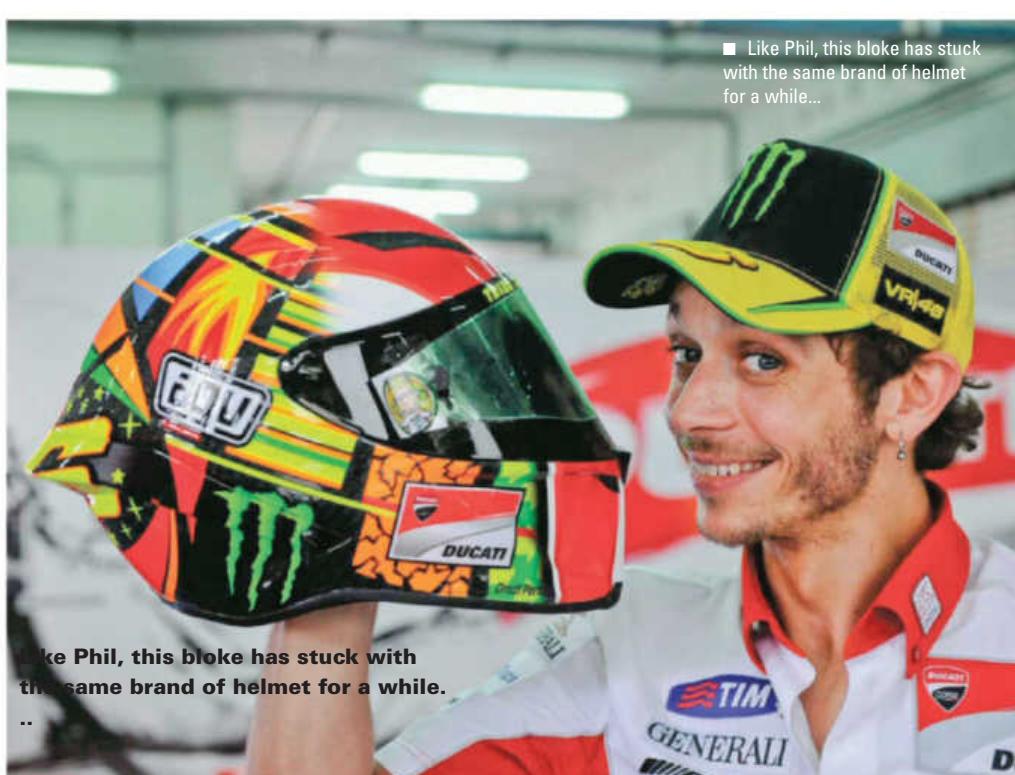
My first helmet was an Arai, came free with the bike. I still wear Arai today. My wife wears a Shoei. I would too, but find them uncomfortable. I tried a Nolan a year or two ago and found it just as uncomfortable as the Shoei, too short at the base of the skull. I think you get the picture by now.

Couldn't agree more with Seddo's article in #113: motorcycles are safe until you fall off. I ride with a completely different mindset when my wife is on the back as opposed to when I'm riding solo.

Peter Glasson

Email

*You've touched on the reasons we don't do a helmet comparison: fit and comfort. They're different for every head. The results would be so subjective they'd be misleading. Instead, we try to push the importance of picking the helmet that fits, certainly as a first priority. Fit will also impact upon how loud the helmet is for each wearer, though the other factors (quality, vision etc) are obviously easier to quantify. I just don't feel it's worth doing a comparison when we can objectively measure only a few of the important factors. — Matho*



Like Phil, this bloke has stuck with the same brand of helmet for a while.

# ROAD BIKE & SCOOTER PRICE GUIDE

## Can I afford it? Is there something better for the money?

**N**ew bike prices can go up and down like the stock market, so in every issue we'll bring you the sticker prices. To be completely up to date with things like factory discounts and incentives, check the *Road Rider* website ([www.roadrider.com.au](http://www.roadrider.com.au)) where we will bring you all the special deals, bonus offers and cashback promotions we can find.

We have included the importers' websites, which is the place to go if you're looking for more information. You'll see that we haven't listed every bike on the market (yet) but we aim to get there with all of them.

Sometimes even we struggle to find the details of the smaller, newer importers. Meanwhile, enjoy this most meaningful of Australian bike listings, covering the bikes you're interested in.

The prices are the most up-to-date ones available from the distributors. They may change, of course, subject to specials coming and going.

We've also made it abundantly clear which prices are ride-away and which don't include on-road costs; the difference to your final payout can be significant, so don't compare apples with oranges.

BRAND & MODEL	WE SAY	PRICE	
<b>APRILIA</b> <a href="http://www.aprilia.com.au">www.aprilia.com.au</a>			
Aprilia prices are maximum recommended advertised ride-away price.			
<b>Road</b>			
Shiver Sport 750 ABS.....	Oh so good .....	\$14,000ra	
Tuono V4R APRC.....	Upright sportsbike .....	\$22,000ra	
Tuono V4 1100 RR.....	Naked 1100cc V4? Yes! .....	\$23,000ra	
Tuono V4 1100 Factory.....	Take the RR and add more.....	\$25,000ra	
RSV4 R APRC.....	High tech, high spec .....	\$24,000ra	
RSV4 RR.....	Higher spec, higher speed.....	\$25,000ra	
RSV4 R Factory APRC ABS.....	Racing black .....	\$30,000ra	
RSV4 RR Race Pack.....	Ready to race .....	\$31,000ra	
<b>Adv/Touring</b>			
Caponord Strada .....	High-tech all-road traveller .....	\$20,000ra	
Caponord Touring .....	Truly great all-rounder.....	\$23,000ra	
Caponord Rally.....	The hardcore Capo .....	\$24,000ra	
<b>Scooters</b>			
SR50R Carb SBK.....	Biaggi replica .....	\$4000ra	
SR MT 50 2T .....	Entry point .....	\$2925ra	
SR MT 125 4T .....	Cheap commuting .....	\$3900ra	
SR MT 125 4T SBK LE .....	SBK-styled commuter .....	\$3900ra	
Scarabeo 200 ie.....	Crisp performer .....	\$5900ra	
SR Max 300 .....	Do it all .....	\$8000ra	
SRV 850 ATC ABS .....	Large with the lot .....	\$15,000ra	
<b>BENELLI</b> <a href="http://www.urbanmotoimports.com.au">www.urbanmotoimports.com.au</a>			
<b>Road</b>			
BN251.....	Nice starter .....	\$TBA	
BN302.....	Italy's response to the 300cc LAMS.....	\$5590+orc	
BN600i.....	Base-model mid-sized four .....	\$8990+orc	
BN600S LAMS .....	New LAMS model .....	\$8990+orc	
BN600R .....	New sporty naked bike .....	\$9990+orc	
BN600RS LAMS .....	Another new LAMS model.....	\$9990+orc	
BN600GT .....	Mid-size sports-touring .....	\$8990+orc	
BN600GTS .....	LAMS model .....	\$8990+orc	
TNT 899.....	Mid-sized entertainer .....	\$16,990+orc	
TNT 1130R.....	Naked dynamite .....	\$22,690+orc	
Tre-K 1130.....	Out of the ordinary .....	\$18,490+orc	
<b>Adv/Touring</b>			
TRE-K Amazonas .....	Be an individual .....	\$19,690+orc	
<b>BIMOTA</b> <a href="http://www.urbanmotoimports.com.au">www.urbanmotoimports.com.au</a>			
<b>Road</b>			
BB3 .....	1000cc BMW, Italian flair.....	\$72,888+orc	
DB5R.....	Light and lovely sportsbike .....	\$37,990+orc	
DB8 Oro Nero.....	Expensive excitement .....	\$84,990+orc	
Tesi 3D Naked.....	The full skeleton on show .....	\$55,990+orc	
<b>BOLLINI</b> <a href="http://www.motorsportimporters.com.au">www.motorsportimporters.com.au</a>			
<b>Road</b>			
Speed 200.....	Economy ticket .....	\$2290+orc	
<b>Cruiser</b>			
Retro 200.....	New releas .....	\$TBA	



■ Trike manufacturer Can-AM Spyder has released some new models this year including the F3 SM6, available for \$25,790+orc.

**CAN-AM (BRP)**[www.brp.com](http://www.brp.com)**Road**

Spyder RS SM5.....	The "Spyder" experience .....	\$19,990+orc
Spyder RSS SE5 .....	Supersports auto .....	\$23,990+orc
Spyder RS SPE SE5.....	Special-edition RS.....	\$25,390+orc
Spyder ST SE5.....	The sports-touring Spyder.....	\$25,490+orc
Spyder ST LTD SE5.....	The ST with more .....	\$28,990+orc
Spyder F3 SM6.....	Cruiser-style model with 1330cc triple ..	\$25,790+orc
Spyder F3 S SE6 .....	F3 with semi-auto gears and more.....	\$28,890+orc
Spyder RT SM6.....	New 1330cc triple engine.....	\$31,490+orc
Spyder RTS SE6.....	RT plus semi-auto and more .....	\$39,990+orc
Spyder RT Limited SE6.....	The full touring triple.....	\$41,990+orc
Spyder RT SPE.....	Top-spec special edition.....	\$41,690+orc

**CF MOTO**[www.cfmoto.com.au](http://www.cfmoto.com.au)**Road**

VNight .....	Great learner.....	\$2690+orc
Jetmax 250 .....	Freeway capable scooter .....	\$4190+orc
Leader.....	Not fussy .....	\$2190+orc
650NK.....	May ruffle some feathers.....	\$6290+orc
650TK.....	Bargain touring .....	\$7749+orc

**Cruiser**

V5 .....	Where's the engine? .....	\$4190+orc
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**CONFEDERATE**[www.urbanmotoimports.com.au](http://www.urbanmotoimports.com.au)**Cruiser**

R131 Fighter .....	Heavyweight champ .....	\$POA
X132 Hellcat.....	Badass .....	\$79,990+orc
X132 Hellcat Combat.....	American war machine .....	\$94,990+orc
X132 Hellcat Speedster.....	American muscle .....	\$98,000+orc
X135 Wraith .....	Industrial art .....	\$POA
R135 Wraith Combat.....	American firepower .....	\$POA

**DAELIM**[www.daelim.com.au](http://www.daelim.com.au)**Road**

VJF250.....	Adequate style.....	\$3990+orc
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**Cruiser**

Daystar 250 EFI .....	Fat, feet-forward cruiser .....	\$4920+orc
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**Scooter**

Bbone .....	Its clothes are off .....	\$3490+orc
Besbi.....	Small and cute .....	\$2190+orc
S1.....	Nice style .....	\$2990+orc

**DUCATI**[www.ducati.com.au](http://www.ducati.com.au)**Road**

Monster 659 ABS .....	Monster the LAM .....	\$12,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Icon (Ducati Red) ..	Entry-level .....	\$12,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Icon ('62 Yellow) ....	As above but yellower .....	\$13,140+orc
Ducati Scrambler Urban Enduro .....	For the burbs and backroads .....	\$14,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Classic .....	Living in the '70s .....	\$14,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Full Throttle .....	Flat track performer .....	\$14,990+orc

Monster 821 Dark .....	The little beast steps up .....	\$16,290+orc
Monster 821 Red .....	Red devil .....	\$16,790+orc
Monster 821 White .....	Angelic monster .....	\$16,990+orc
Monster 821 Stripe .....	Striped paint job .....	\$17,990+orc
Streetfighter 848 .....	Precision fighter, special price .....	\$17,490+orc
Panigale 899 Red .....	Smaller, sweeter superbike .....	\$19,990+orc
Panigale 899 .....	In white .....	\$20,490+orc
Hypermotard Red .....	A hooligan on wheels .....	\$16,990+orc
Hypermotard .....	In black .....	\$17,290+orc
Hypermotard SP .....	With tricked-up suspension .....	\$21,490+orc
Hyperstrada .....	Manners & madness .....	\$17,990+orc
Monster 1200 .....	Original 1200 .....	\$19,990+orc
Monster 1200 .....	With stripes — order only .....	\$25,490+orc
Monster 1200 S Red .....	With better bits .....	\$24,290+orc
Monster 1200 S .....	In white .....	\$24,490+orc
Panigale 1299 .....	100cc more for 2015 .....	\$27,990+orc
Panigale S ABS .....	Electronic Öhlins! .....	\$33,990+orc
Panigale R ABS .....	Race passion .....	\$45,990+orc

**Cruiser**

Diavel .....	A true power-cruiser .....	\$24,490+orc
Diavel Red .....	The devil on your shoulder .....	\$24,990+orc
Diavel Carbon Red .....	Deal with the devil .....	\$30,290+orc
Diavel Carbon White .....	An angel in disguise? .....	\$30,490+orc
Diavel Titanium .....	Harder than steel .....	\$39,990+orc

**Adv Touring**

Multistrada 1200 ABS .....	4 in 1 with ABS .....	\$22,990+orc
Multistrada 1200 DVT .....	Smoother all-round master .....	\$23,990+orc
Multistrada S DVT .....	Higher tech, in red .....	\$27,990+orc
Multistrada S DVT .....	In white .....	\$28,490+orc
Multistrada 1200 STouring .....	See the world .....	\$28,490+orc
Multistrada 1200 S Pikes Peak .....	Flashy paint job .....	\$31,990+orc
Multistrada 1200 Granturismo .....	Tour perfection .....	\$30,490+orc

**ERIK BEULL RACING**[www.urbanmotoimports.com.au](http://www.urbanmotoimports.com.au)**Road**

1190RS Carbon .....	175hp, 176kg of joy .....	\$56,990+orc
1190RX .....	Sporting masterpiece .....	\$26,490+orc
1190SX .....	Superbike basis .....	\$23,490+orc
1190AX .....	The adventurous one .....	\$TBA

**HARLEY-DAVIDSON**[www.harley-davidson.com](http://www.harley-davidson.com)**All H-D prices are ride-away.****Cruiser**

XG500 Street 500 .....	Learner legal .....	\$9995ra
XL883L SuperLow .....	For the shorties .....	\$14,750ra
XL883N Iron 883 .....	Iron tough .....	\$14,995ra
XL1200C Custom .....	Customary show off .....	\$18,750ra
XL1200X Forty-Eight .....	Retro cool .....	\$18,995ra
XL1200V Seventy-Two .....	Vintage muscle .....	\$18,495ra
XL1200T Super Low .....	Cool little tourer .....	\$19,250ra
VRSCDX Night Rod Special .....	Drag bike .....	\$27,250ra
VRSCF Muscle .....	Muscle me .....	\$26,995ra
FXDB Street Bob .....	Versatile .....	\$22,495ra
FXDBB Street Bob Special .....	Street smarts .....	\$23,995ra
FXDL Low Rider .....	Not laying low .....	\$23,495ra
FXDWG Wide Glide .....	Let your hair hang down .....	\$24,995ra
FXDF Fat Bob .....	Lay off the burgers, Bob! .....	\$25,495ra
FLD Dyna Switchback .....	Dress up, dress down .....	\$26,250ra
FLS Softail Slim .....	Slim, yet PH fat! .....	\$26,250ra
FXST Softail Standard .....	The original ride .....	\$27,250ra
FLSTFB Fat Boy Lo .....	Low bruiser .....	\$28,750ra
FLSTF Fat Boy .....	Big bruiser .....	\$28,995ra
FLSTN Softail Deluxe .....	Classy dude .....	\$28,995ra
FLSTNSE CVO Softail Deluxe .....	110ci, LEDs plus .....	\$44,995ra
FXSB Breakout .....	Urban street styling .....	\$29,495ra
FLSTC Heritage S'tail Classic .....	Visually beautiful .....	\$29,995ra
FLHRC Road King Classic .....	Be the king .....	\$32,495ra
FLHXS Street Glide Special .....	The original bagger .....	\$34,995ra

## PRICE GUIDE

FLHXSE CVO Street Glide.....	110ci ripper.....	\$46,995ra
FLTRXS Road Glide Special.....	Dynamic, fixed-fairing tourer.....	\$34,495ra
FLTRXSE CVO Rd Glide Ultra .....	Maybe H-D's best tourer .....	\$48,995ra
FLHTK Electra Glide Ultra Ltd .....	Works burger .....	\$37,995ra
FLHTKSE CVO Ultra Ltd .....	110ci mega-tourer.....	\$50,995ra

### MOTOGP FOR THE STREET

Honda's road-ready MotoGP replica, the RC213V-S, is now available. Developed by Honda Racing Corporation with input from MotoGP riders, the bike has apparently had the minimum amount of changes made from the RC213V race bike it's based on. Some of the modifications for road compliance include a road-legal exhaust system, the addition of a starter motor, some minor changes to the brake discs and pads, as well as switching to a more conventional transmission system. Honda emphasises the machine's light weight of 170kg, its agility and ease of riding. However, the bike puts out just 117kW in street trim, well short of a MotoGP bike's 175kW. To extract its potential 158kW (and drop weight to a MotoGP-like 160kg), you'll have to buy the race kit. If you have a spare quarter-million dollars or so lying around, contact Honda via [www.rc213v-s.com](http://www.rc213v-s.com) to get the ball rolling before orders close on 30 September. It will take about six to 12 months for them to build it for you.



### HONDA

[www.honda.com.au](http://www.honda.com.au)

#### Road

CB125E .....	Cheap commuter .....	\$2199+orc
CB300FA.....	250cc weight, 300cc power .....	\$5699+orc
CBR300.....	Big H attacks the Ninja 300 .....	\$4999+orc
CBR300 ABS .....	The anti-lock brake option .....	\$5499+orc
CBR300R.....	Special edition.....	\$5199+orc
CBR300R.....	Special edition ABS .....	\$5699+orc
CB400A ABS .....	Bulletproof .....	\$11,199+orc
CBR500R .....	Sporty little twin .....	\$7499+orc
CBR500R ABS .....	ABS option .....	\$7999+orc
CB500F ABS .....	Sweet as .....	\$7499+orc
CB650F ABS .....	New naked four .....	\$9999+orc
CBR600RR.....	Versatile supersport .....	\$14,390+orc
CBR650F ABS .....	Mid-ranger with torque .....	\$10,599+orc
CTX700DA .....	Dual Clutch Transmission .....	\$10,899+orc
NC750SA ABS .....	The most practical naked bike? .....	\$8899+orc
VFR800 .....	Tried and true package .....	\$14,699+orc
VFR800X Crossrunner.....	Sports-tourer goes all-rounder .....	\$14,599+orc
CBR1000RR.....	Ride what Casey rides .....	\$15,899+orc
CBR1000RR ABS .....	Blade with braking backup .....	\$16,899+orc
VFR1200F ABS .....	For the tech heads .....	\$16,999+orc
GL1800B F6B.....	Stripped Wing .....	\$25,199+orc
GL1800 Goldwing Luxury.....	The ultimate luxury tourer .....	\$36,299+orc
<b>Cruiser</b>		
VT400 .....	Classic-styled LAM .....	\$9399+orc
CTX700N ABS .....	A bike for everything .....	\$9199+orc

VT750C Shadow .....	Classic appeal .....	\$11,749+orc
CTX1300.....	V4 cruiser with unique style .....	\$18,499+orc
VT1300CX Fury .....	Chopped dragster .....	\$15,599+orc
GL1800C F6C Valkyrie .....	Valkyrie returns with muscle .....	\$20,199+orc

#### Adv/Touring

CB500X ABS .....	Adventure sports .....	\$7599+orc
VFR1200X Crosstourer ABS .....	Smooth and comfy all-roader .....	\$17,499+orc

#### Scooter

Dio 110 .....	New kid in town .....	\$2699+orc
PCX150 .....	Stylish and practical .....	\$4199+orc
NSS300 Forza .....	Sporty and flexible .....	\$6999+orc

### HYOSUNG

[www.hyosung.com.au](http://www.hyosung.com.au)

#### Road

GT250 .....	Great beginner .....	\$2990+orc
GT650 .....	Naked value and style .....	\$5190+orc
GT650R .....	Easy, sporty, affordable .....	\$5490+orc

#### Cruiser

GV250 Aquila .....	Little cutie .....	\$3990+orc
GV650C Aquila Classic .....	LAMS value .....	\$6490+orc

### INDIAN MOTORCYCLE

[www.indianmotorcycle.com.au](http://www.indianmotorcycle.com.au)

#### Cruiser

Scout .....	Sportster meets V-Rod? .....	\$17,995ra
Chief Dark Horse .....	Lots of attitude .....	\$26,995ra
Chief .....	Leading the tribe back! .....	\$28,995ra
Chief Vintage .....	Signature heritage aesthetic .....	\$31,495ra
Chieftain .....	First Indian tourer/bagger .....	\$35,995ra
Roadmaster .....	Full-dress tourer .....	\$38,995ra

### KAWASAKI

[www.kawasaki.com.au](http://www.kawasaki.com.au)

#### Road

Z250SL .....	New LAMS model .....	\$5299+orc
Z250SLA.....	New LAMS with ABS .....	\$5599+orc
Z300 ABS .....	Ninja turned streetfighter .....	\$5999+orc
Ninja 300 .....	Even better again! .....	\$5999+orc
Ninja 300 SE .....	Tastes like lime .....	\$6399+orc
Ninja 300 SE ABS .....	30th Anniversary edition .....	\$6399+orc
ER-6n/L ABS .....	Quirky .....	\$9999+orc
Ninja 650/L ABS .....	Mid-sized gem .....	\$10,499+orc
Ninja ZX-6R (599) .....	Striking .....	\$14,999+orc
Ninja ZX-6R ABS (636) SE .....	Bigger, gruntier, prettier .....	\$16,649+orc
Z800 ABS .....	Sharper .....	\$12,999+orc

The Kawasaki Versys 1000 has had some updates for 2015, including but not limited to standard centrestand and ABS, three-mode traction control, selectable power modes and fully adjustable front suspension. The pannier system has also been updated, with the pannier and top box able to be used at the same time. It also comes with a big range of accessories. Check it out in store. \$15,999+orc.



W800SE.....	Nostalgic, relaxed cruising .....	\$12,499+orc
Z1000 ABS SE.....	Special edition.....	\$16,799+orc
Ninja 1000 ABS.....	A sword with soul.....	\$15,999+orc
Ninja ZX-10R.....	Non-ABS 30th Anniv model .....	\$18,999+orc
Ninja ZX-10R ABS.....	30th Anniversary model.....	\$20,699+orc
Ninja H2 .....	Supercharged superbike.....	\$33,000+orc
1400GTR ABS.....	Transcontinental.....	\$24,999+orc
Ninja ZX-14R ABS SE.....	Special edition.....	\$20,299+orc
Ninja ZX-14R ABS SE Öhlins.....	Öhlins, white, gold, scorching.....	\$21,799+orc

**Cruiser**

Vulcan S .....	LAMS cruisin' .....	\$9999+orc
Vulcan 900 Classic SE .....	Classically glamorous .....	\$12,499+orc
Vulcan 900 Custom.....	Sleek-looking mid-weight.....	\$12,699+orc
Vulcan 1700 Classic ABS.....	Great blank canvas .....	\$19,999+orc
Vulcan 1700 Nomad ABS.....	Add a bit of bling.....	\$22,999+orc
Vulcan 1700 Vaquero ABS.....	Go to the dark side.....	\$24,499+orc
Vulcan 1700 Voyager ABS.....	Plush ride .....	\$25,999+orc

**Adv Touring**

KLR650 .....	Bargain with a capital B .....	\$8099+orc
Versys 650 ABS .....	Appealing all-rounder .....	\$9999+orc
Versys 650L ABS .....	LAMS model.....	\$9999+orc
Versys 1000 .....	Bitumen burner .....	\$15,999+orc

**KTM**[www.ktm.com.au](http://www.ktm.com.au)**Road**

390 Duke .....	Z300 beater? .....	\$7295+orc
390 RC .....	All new available soon .....	\$8295+orc
690 Duke R.....	The sportier motard.....	\$14,495+orc
1190 RC8 R .....	The orange flash .....	\$25,995+orc
1290 Super Duke R .....	Ballsy streetfighter.....	\$24,995+orc

**Adv Touring**

690 Enduro R .....	Extreme riders only .....	\$14,695+orc
1050 Adventure .....	Adventure stripped bare .....	\$17,995+orc
1190 Adventure .....	High-tech adventurer .....	\$23,995+orc
1190 Adventure R .....	Add more adventure .....	\$24,995+orc
1290 Super Adventure .....	The ultimate Adventure .....	\$26,995+orc

**KYMCO**[www.kymco.com.au](http://www.kymco.com.au)**Scooter**

Like 125 .....	Fall in love .....	\$2995+orc
Super 8 125.....	Cool jigger.....	\$2895+orc
Espresso 150 .....	I'll take a double shot .....	\$3199+orc
Like 200 .....	Classic performer .....	\$3495+orc
People GT300i .....	For the people .....	\$6345+orc
Downtown 300i ABS .....	All-rounder with ABS .....	\$7495+orc

**Road**

CK 125 .....	No nonsense.....	\$2495+orc
Venox 250 .....	Value and looks .....	\$6199+orc

**LARO**[www.laro.com.au](http://www.laro.com.au)**Road**

V Retro 250 .....	DT250 clone .....	\$2990+orc
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**Cruiser**

Cruiser 250.....	Learner's ride .....	\$3999+orc
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**MEGELLI**[www.megelli.com](http://www.megelli.com)**Road**

250S.....	Nice looker .....	\$4250+orc
250R.....	Italian styling .....	\$4850+orc
250SE.....	Sportsbike handling .....	\$5650+orc

**MOTO GUZZI**[www.motoguzzi.com.au](http://www.motoguzzi.com.au)

Moto Guzzi prices are maximum recommended advertised ride-away price.

**Road**

V7 Stone II.....	Minimalist retro .....	\$14,000ra
V7 Special II.....	Faithful to the original V7 .....	\$14,500ra
V7 Racer SE .....	Limited edition marvel .....	\$16,000ra
1200 Sport 4V SE .....	Grunter .....	\$19,400ra
Griso 1200 8V .....	Grand slam .....	\$21,500ra

**Adv Touring**

Stelvio 1200 8V NTX ABS .....	Big brute .....	\$23,500ra
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**Cruiser**

California Audace .....	Old school style .....	\$TBA
California Eldorado .....	Blast from the past .....	\$TBA
California 1400 Custom .....	Kalifornia attitude .....	\$23,000ra
California 1400 Touring .....	All a Cali should be .....	\$26,000ra
California Touring SE .....	Special Edition .....	\$26,500ra

**MV AGUSTA**[www.mvagustaimports.com.au](http://www.mvagustaimports.com.au)

All MV Agusta prices are ride-away.

**Road**

Brutale 675 EAS .....	Bit of oomph at a good price .....	\$15,799ra
F3 675 .....	Sweet .....	\$18,699ra
Brutale 800 EAS .....	More power .....	\$17,699ra
Brutale 800 RR .....	More power, more handling .....	\$19,999ra
F3 800 .....	Track performance .....	\$19,999ra
Stradale 800 .....	An all-round MV .....	\$19,999ra
Turismo Veloce 800 .....	All-roader, coming soon .....	\$TBA
Turismo Velocita 800 Lusso .....	Up-spec all-roader, coming soon .....	\$TBA
Brutale 800 Dragster .....	Nanananana Batman! .....	\$20,499ra
Brutale 800 Dragster RR .....	Batman meets Gucci .....	\$22,999ra
F4 1000 .....	Beauty and the beast within .....	\$24,499ra
F4 1000 RR .....	Exotic weapon .....	\$33,999ra
F4 RC .....	The ultimate F4 .....	\$55,880ra

■ Piaggio has significantly dropped pricing on a few models including the Beverly, which has come down from \$8690+orc to \$7990+orc.



## PRICE GUIDE

Brutale 1090.....	More charm .....	\$17,990ra
Brutale RR 1090.....	Unleash the brute within .....	\$22,999ra
Brutale 1090 Corsa.....	Top jock.....	\$27,999ra

### PGO

[www.motorsportimporters.com.au](http://www.motorsportimporters.com.au)

#### Scooter

Ligero 50.....	Good, little package .....	\$1990+orc
Ligero 150.....	Good, small package .....	\$3290+orc
X-Hot.....	It's a hottie .....	\$3990+orc
Gmax.....	Go to the max.....	\$4700+orc

### PIAGGIO

[www.piaggio.com.au](http://www.piaggio.com.au)

#### Scooter

Typhoon 125.....	Blow you away.....	\$2890+orc
Fly 150ie.....	Buzz around the city .....	\$3490+orc
Liberty 150ie.....	Big wheel freedom .....	\$3990+orc
Beverly 350.....	Higher performance .....	\$7990+orc
Yourban 300.....	Leaning three-wheeler .....	\$9490+orc
X10 500.....	Big features .....	\$10,990+orc

### ROYAL ENFIELD

[www.royalenfieldaustralia.com](http://www.royalenfieldaustralia.com)

#### Road

B5 Bullet 500.....	Fire your guns .....	\$7990ra
C5 Classic 500.....	Individual style .....	\$8290ra
GT Continental.....	Cafe racer like they used to be .....	\$8990ra

■ Royal Enfield is another brand that's recently been taken over by Urban Moto Imports. Pricing has gone up but is now ride-away. The Classic 500 is available for \$8290ra.



### SUZUKI

[www.suzukimotorcycles.com.au](http://www.suzukimotorcycles.com.au)

#### Road

Inazuma 250.....	Let your inner zoomer out .....	\$4990+orc
TU250XL3.....	Retro learner .....	\$5990+orc
DR-Z400SM.....	Everyday motard .....	\$8990+orc
SFV650/LAMS.....	Commuting and fun duties.....	\$9990+orc
GSX650F/LAMS.....	Silky smooth.....	\$10,490+orc
GSX-R600.....	Angry bee .....	\$14,990+orc
GSR750.....	Naked cracker .....	\$10,790+orc
GSX-R750.....	The legend continues.....	\$15,990+orc
GSX-R1000.....	Even lighter and faster .....	\$18,490+orc
GSX-S1000.....	Naked superbike for 2015 .....	\$TBA
GSX-S1000F.....	2015's new super-tourer .....	\$TBA
GSF1250S Bandit ABS.....	Long-distance ease.....	\$12,990+orc
GSX1250FA.....	A little bit of everything .....	\$14,990+orc
GSX1300R Hayabusa.....	Soar like an eagle.....	\$19,290+orc

#### Cruiser

VL250 Intruder.....	Bang that drum .....	\$6690+orc
LS650 Boulevard S40.....	Big single cylinder .....	\$7990+orc
VL800 C50T.....	All-new class .....	\$10,990+orc
VL1500 C90T.....	Bad boy .....	\$15,490+orc
VLR1800T C109RT.....	Now as a tourer.....	\$18,990+orc
VZR1800 M109R.....	Beaut and brutal.....	\$18,990+orc
VZR1800 M109R.....	Black edition .....	\$19,490+orc

#### Adv Touring

DL650 V-Strom .....	Deservedly a big seller .....	\$10,290+orc
DL650 V-Strom LAMS .....	Learner approved model .....	\$11,290+orc
DL650 V-Strom XT.....	Re-styled and updated for 2015 .....	\$11,490+orc
DL650 V-Strom XT LAMS.....	Learner approved.....	\$10,990+orc
DL1000 V-Strom .....	Powerfully competent .....	\$15,490+orc

#### Scooter

UK110 Address .....	New city slicker .....	\$2490+orc
AN200A Burgman 200 ABS .....	The smallest city burger .....	\$5490+orc
AN650A Burgman ABS .....	A maxi to tour on .....	\$13,590+orc

### SYM

[www.scoota.com.au](http://www.scoota.com.au)

#### Scooter

Classic 150 .....	Noble ride .....	\$3199+orc
VS 150 .....	Branch away .....	\$3549+orc
Symphony 150.....	Sporty big wheeler .....	\$3399+orc
HD Evo 200 .....	Whacko! .....	\$5199+orc
CityCom 300i.....	Practical and competitive.....	\$6099+orc
Firenze 300.....	Full of features.....	\$6199+orc
MaxSym 400i .....	Ride-away price.....	\$8449+orc

### TGB

[www.tgbscooters.com.au](http://www.tgbscooters.com.au)

#### Scooter

Bellavita 125 .....	Very chic .....	\$3990+orc
X-Race 150.....	You'll need knee sliders .....	\$2590+orc
Bullet 150 .....	Small-calibre projectile .....	\$3390+orc
Xmotion 300.....	Smooth mover .....	\$4990+orc
Bellavita 300i .....	Very chic, and bigger .....	\$5490+orc

### TORINO

[www.torinomotorcycles.com.au](http://www.torinomotorcycles.com.au)

Torino ride-away prices are mostly Sydney-based and may vary elsewhere.

#### Cruiser

Veloce 250.....	American styled .....	\$4695ra
Titan 250 .....	Chop chop .....	\$TBA

#### Scooter

Galetta Retro.....	Plenty of features .....	\$2195ra
Aero Sport .....	Cut the wind .....	\$2195ra
Famosa .....	City chic .....	\$2395ra
Messina Classic .....	New retro (Vespa) beauty .....	\$3495ra

### TRIUMPH

[www.triumphmotorcycles.com.au](http://www.triumphmotorcycles.com.au)

#### Road

Street Triple 660 LAMS .....	Learner-legal thrills .....	\$12,490+orc
Street Triple 675 ABS .....	Streets ahead .....	\$12,990+orc
Street Triple 675 R ABS .....	Even further ahead .....	\$13,990+orc
Daytona 675 ABS .....	Supersport gem .....	\$14,990+orc
Daytona 675R ABS .....	Track day heaven .....	\$16,990+orc
Bonneville .....	Tradition reborn .....	\$12,490+orc
Bonneville .....	Two tone .....	\$12,990+orc
Bonneville T100 Black .....	Livin' in the '70s .....	\$13,490+orc
Bonneville T100 A2 .....	Nostalgia rules .....	\$14,250+orc
Bonneville T100 SE .....	Special edition .....	\$14,990+orc
Bonneville Newchurch SE .....	April 2015 .....	\$12,990+orc
Bonneville T214 Land Speed LE .....	Coming soon .....	\$14,490+orc
Bonneville Spirit SE .....	April 2015 .....	\$13,990+orc
Scrambler .....	Dirt track racer .....	\$14,390+orc
Scrambler .....	Two tone .....	\$14,990+orc
Thruxton .....	To the café! .....	\$14,390+orc
Thruxton Ace SE .....	Ace Café special edition .....	\$14,990+orc
SpeedTriple ABS .....	It's a gem .....	\$16,990+orc
SpeedTriple R ABS .....	Sex on wheels .....	\$19,990+orc
StreetTriple RX SE .....	Inspired by the Daytona 675 .....	\$14,990+orc
Sprint GT .....	All world capabilities .....	\$15,990+orc
Trophy SE .....	Superb tourer .....	\$27,990+orc
Cruiser		
America .....	Easy urban rider .....	\$13,490ra
Speed Master .....	All round goodness .....	\$13,090+orc
Thunderbird ABS .....	Aptly named flyer .....	\$19,990+orc
Thunderbird ABSTT .....	Two-tone paint .....	\$19,990ra
Thunderbird Storm ABS .....	Thunderous .....	\$20,990+orc

Thunderbird ABS HAZE .....	Shine.....	\$21,990+orc	FZ6R.....	Full fairing, LAMS model .....	\$9999ra
Thunderbird Nightstorm .....	The dark and stormy one.....	\$22,990+orc	FZ6R SP.....	Special edition.....	\$10,499+orc
Thunderbird Commander .....	The bigger, tougher T-bird.....	\$21,490+orc	YZF-R6.....	WSS champ .....	\$15,999+orc
Thunderbird Commander TT.....	Two-tone paint .....	\$21,990+orc	MT-03.....	Torquey LAMS single .....	\$9999+orc
Thunderbird LT.....	T-bird goes touring.....	\$23,490+orc	MT-07LA.....	Learner legal thriller.....	\$9599+orc
Thunderbird LTTT .....	Two-tone paint .....	\$23,990+orc	MT-07HO.....	Full-size, full-power twin .....	\$9999+orc
Rocket III Roadster ABS.....	What's not to love about 2300cc? .....	\$22,490+orc	FZ8N .....	Hot all-rounder .....	\$12,990+orc
Rocket X .....	Bad to the bone .....	\$23,490+orc	FZ8S.....	Enjoy the road and corners .....	\$13,990+orc
Rocket III Touring ABS.....	Reasonably easy to ride .....	\$24,490+orc	MT-09 .....	Three-cylinder thriller .....	\$11,299+orc
<b>Adv Touring</b>					
Tiger 800 XR .....	Great all-rounder .....	\$15,090+orc	MT-09 ABS .....	ABS option.....	\$11,799+orc
Tiger 800 XRX .....	Hi-tech all-rounder .....	16,590+orc	MT-09 Tracer .....	Loony tours! .....	\$14,999+orc
Tiger 800 XRT .....	Equipped for touring .....	\$17,890+orc	TDM900 .....	Mixed-up marvel .....	\$13,599+orc
Tiger 800 XC .....	The more hardcore Tiger .....	\$16,590+orc	FZ1N .....	Ready for anything .....	\$15,699+orc
Tiger 800 XCx .....	Hi-tech and hardcore .....	\$17,690+orc	FZ1S .....	With protection .....	\$16,499+orc
Tiger 800 XCA .....	Equipped for adventure .....	\$19,390+orc	YZF-R1 .....	Rossi's roadbike? .....	\$23,499+orc
Tiger 1050 Sport ABS .....	More growl for the road .....	\$15,990+orc	YZF-R1M .....	No, this one's Rossi's roadbike! .....	\$29,999+orc
Tiger Explorer 1200 .....	True adventure-tourer .....	\$20,490+orc	XJR1300 .....	Refined cool .....	\$13,999+orc
Tiger Explorer Wire Wheels .....	The tougher version .....	\$20,990+orc	FJR1300ATouring Edition .....	Police-spec tourer .....	\$23,999+orc
<b>URAL</b>					
<a href="http://www.ural-motorcycles.com">www.ural-motorcycles.com</a>					

**Road**

T .....	Cult status outfit .....	\$20,340+orc
cT .....	Lower stance, better handling .....	\$20,340+orc
Retro .....	The classic of classics .....	\$23,410+orc
Tourist .....	Sidecar touring in classic elegance .....	\$22,500+orc
<b>Adv Touring</b>		
Ranger .....	The tougher option .....	\$23,420+orc

**VESPA**[www.vespa.com](http://www.vespa.com)**Scooter**

Primavera LX125 3-Valve .....	For the designer in you .....	\$5590+orc
Primavera LX150 3-Valve .....	With a bit more oomph .....	\$6290+orc
PX150 .....	The purist's ride .....	\$6490+orc
Sprint 150ie 3V .....	Sporty looks .....	\$6590+orc
GTS150ie 3V .....	Practical .....	\$6590+orc
GTS250ie FL .....	Style in a great package .....	\$7890+orc
GTS300 Super FL ABS .....	Vroom vroom .....	\$9190+orc
GTS300 Super Sport FL .....	Sportier style .....	\$9490+orc
946 Bellissima .....	Limited stock .....	\$12,990+orc

**VICTORY**[www.victorymotorcycles.com](http://www.victorymotorcycles.com)

All Victory prices are ride-away.

**Cruiser**

Vegas 8 Ball .....	Sink the 8-ball .....	\$19,995ra
High-Ball .....	Ol' skool cool .....	\$20,995ra
Hammer 8 Ball .....	Hammer that 8-ball .....	\$21,995ra
Judge .....	A younger Victory .....	\$21,995ra
Gunner .....	Very cool bobber .....	\$20,995ra
Hammer S .....	Hammer it! .....	\$23,995ra
Jackpot .....	Showroom custom .....	\$24,995ra
Boardwalk Black .....	Cool classic in black .....	\$23,495ra
Boardwalk Pearl White .....	Cool classic in white .....	\$23,995ra
Cross Country .....	Comfortable touring .....	\$27,495ra
Cross CountryTour .....	Ultra-comfortable touring .....	\$29,995ra
Magnum .....	Cross country bling .....	\$29,995ra
Vision Tour .....	Space age looks .....	\$31,995ra

**VIPER**[www.urbanmotoimports.com](http://www.urbanmotoimports.com)**Cruiser**

Black Diamond .....	2500cc of raw grunt .....	\$54,990+orc
Diamondback .....	Cruising superpower .....	\$54,990+orc

**YAMAHA**[www.yamaha-motor.com](http://www.yamaha-motor.com)**Road**

YZF-R15 V2.0 .....	New version 2.0 .....	\$4299+orc
YZF-R3 .....	Race-replica for learners .....	\$6099+orc
SR400 .....	The classic single is back! .....	\$8999+orc
XJ6NL .....	New 2014 model .....	\$9799ra
XJ6NL SP .....	White edition .....	\$9999ra

■ Yamaha has released its newest edition to the LAMS market, the YZF-R3, available in stores for \$6099+orc or \$6999ra.



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# 5 TIPS FOR BETTER BIKING

Avoid drivers' blind spots, take regular breaks on tour, pack less than you think you need, buy quality wet weather gear ... yes, you've heard them all before. But not this time. Here are five bits of varied advice you may not have been given before, but which deserve to be filed away in the grey matter.

## 1. MOTORWAY EXITS

Never sit on the left of a car as you're coming to a motorway exit. Too often, drivers decide at the last second that they need to get off the motorway ... from the centre lane. If you're in the way, you'll be mowed down. Ever noticed how many memorial crosses are planted at motorway exits?

## 2. SLEEVE ADJUSTERS

Ever wondered why your jacket has press-studs to cinch the sleeves tighter on your arms? If you removed the lining because the weather's warm and dry, the jacket will fit loosely. If you crash, the sleeves may grip the road surface while your arm keeps moving. Your bare forearm may end up grinding down the tar, and the jacket's protective armour could end up pushed back and around to a point where it's not doing its job, leaving your elbow dangerously vulnerable. If you can zip the jacket to your pants, it'll add similar security to your back.

## 3. BORROW THEIR HEADLIGHTS

Riding on a dark night in the country, bike headlights usually aren't very good. If you catch up with a car doing about the same speed as you (or one overtakes you), stick to its tail and use its headlights to bolster yours. The trick is to stay back to about the point where your low beam cuts off just behind the car, filling the space between you with light. Their lights will show you the way, your lights will reveal any hazards like roadkill that appear on the road when the car passes, and you have the added advantage of using the car as a shield

against animals. Obviously, don't do this if your lights are angled so low that they force you to tailgate.

## 4. DETERGENT DE-FOG

Anti-fog inserts are the best anti-fog system, and anti-fog wipes are pretty good too. But if you've got nothing else, use dishwashing liquid. Use pure detergent, not diluted. Drizzle some onto a spot about the size of a five-cent piece and, using a very soft, extremely clean cloth, spread it evenly inside your visor and buff until it is dry and clear — but not so much that you buff it all off again. Done right, this is reasonably effective and should last long enough to get you through a cold, misty

morning. You might even get a second buffing out of it later in the day. Carry a tiny bottle of detergent on tour.

## 5. RIDE ONE-HANDED

We all know we have to countersteer, even if not all of us know what that is. The best way to understand the concept is to ride through a few gentle corners using only one hand to steer. The reason to make a habit of doing this for a little while every day is to make it instinctive, because if you need to take evasive action you'll do it more quickly, more safely and more accurately if countersteering is a muscle-memory action rather than a conscious one. *ARR*



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# LOOKING BACK

## FALL OF EUROPE

The emergence from Japan of Suzuki's GT750 and Kawasaki Z1 in the early '70s saw the Europeans respond with their twin-cylinder arsenal. Machines like the Ducati 900 Supersport, BMW R90S and Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans had superior handling but struggled for speed.

The Euro twins fought to be an alternative

to the better power and ever-improving handling of the Japanese multis. It was a battle that was increasingly lost on the racetrack and sales. By the late '70s, more multis from Japan would be a resounding blow to European sales and racing success.

Suzuki's GS1000, Kawasaki's Z1000 and the Yamaha XS1100 marked the age of the Japanese multi. It was a period of machine

■ Greg Pretty in the 79 6-Hour. Who else misses that Golden Age of Australian motorcycle racing?



production and evolution that would rule the road and racetrack until the late '80s, as it was Ducati's 851 that became the first serious threat to Japanese dominance.

With the 851 evolving to the 916 and then 1098 family in the years to come, Ducati did it alone until the late 2000s, when BMW and Aprilia released their superbikes.

# LOOKING FORWARD

**ISSUE 118 GOES ON SALE AUGUST 20!**

## BIKES, BIKES, BIKES

We ride Triumph's road-focused Tiger 800XRx, have a '70s flashback with the Ducati Scrambler, cruise on Suzuki's learner-legal S40 and ride BMW's meaner, leaner F800R.

## ON THE ROAD

Great travel stories taking us from Uluru to the NSW southern tablelands and into the Black Forest in Germany. Talk about riding all over the world!

## BIKE BY NUMBERS

A whole bunch of fascinating stats and figures about motorcycling or something.

## ORIGINS

In part four of our Origins series, we look at the history of adventure riding. Transalp, Africa Twin, Ténéré, GS, Adventure and Tiger are just a few names that have shaped this market segment into what it is today.

## NOT FORGETTING

All the other beaut stuff and regulars you expect to see in each and every issue of ARR. See you next month!



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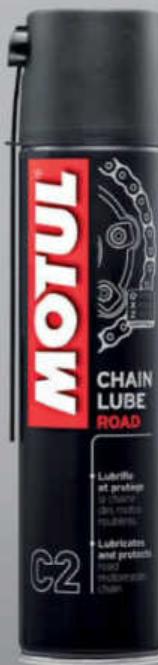
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